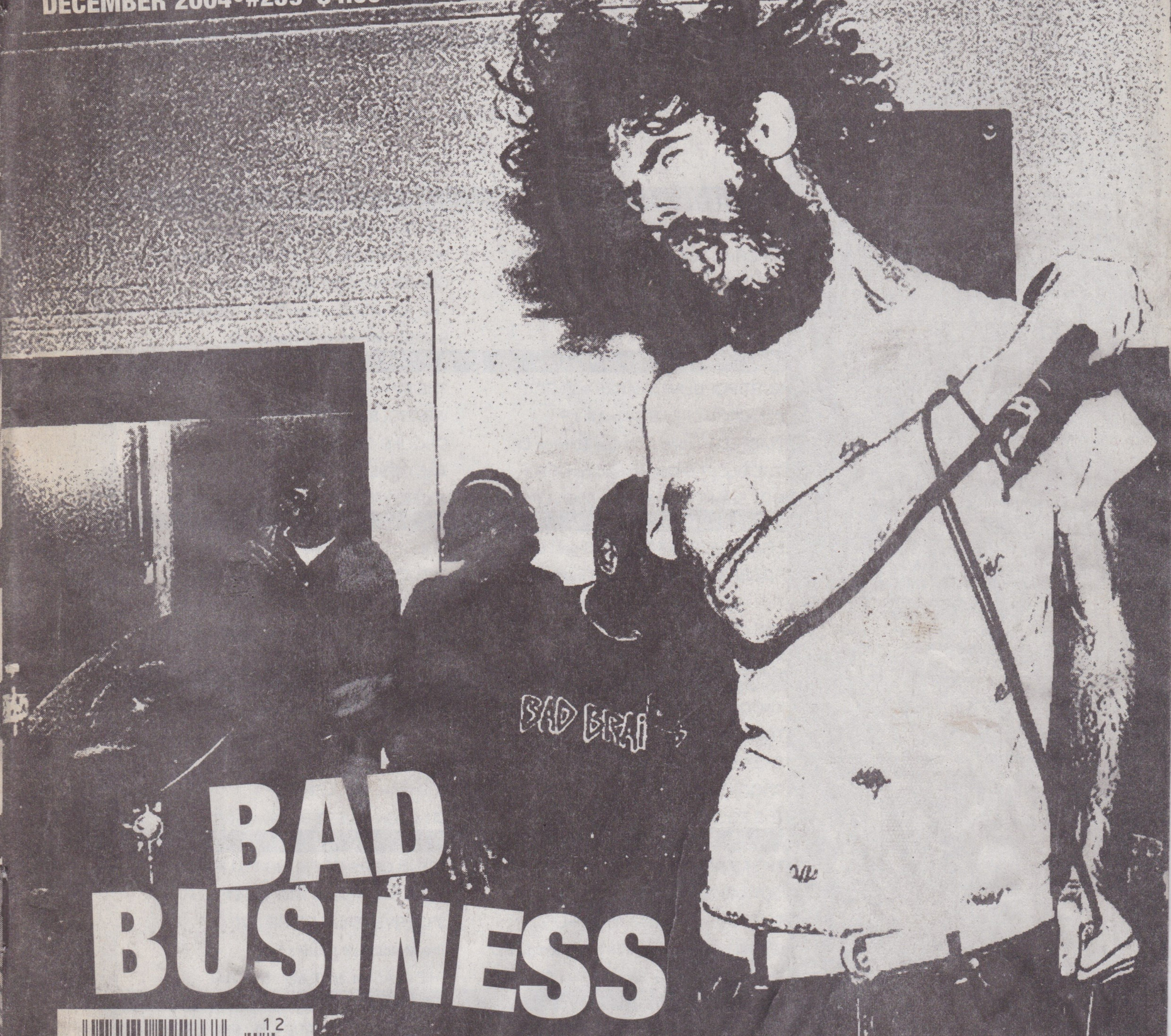
MAXIMUMROCKNROLL

DECEMBER 2004•#259•$4.00



BAD BUSINESS

PLUS: PENELOPE HOUSTON•RAMBO IN SE ASIA
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MAXIMUMROCKNROLL TOP 10

For what it's worth (not much), here's some of the MRR crew's current Top 10 (or so...) lists of stuff we've reviewed this month.

TIM BROOKS

- HORROR-First Blood Part II-10"
- WASTED-Heroes Amongst Thieves-LP
- KNOCKOUT PILLS-1+1=Ate-LP
- ROLLING BLACKOUTS-Black Is Beautiful-LP
- LAUKAUS-12" / ACTION-LP
- SUICIDE BLITZ-Ride the Steel-12"
- DEAD STOP-Down With You-LP
- IMPERIAL LEATHER-Saving Seats-EP
- SELF DEFENSE-Megatonpunkdisruptor-EP
- THE OBSERVERS-live

ROB COONS

MISSING IN ACTION...

PAUL CURRAN

- V/A-Letters from the Landfill-LP
- IMPERIAL LEATHER-Saving Seats-EP
- WRANGLER BRUTES-Zulu-LP
- THE MANHANDLERS-LP
- KNOCKOUT PILLS-1+1=Ate-LP
- WASTED-Heroes Amongst Thieves-LP
- ROLLING BLACKOUTS-Black Is Beautiful-LP
- CRIMSON SWEET-Boulevard-EP
- THE GRIEFS-Whenever You're Around/Give In-45
- BAMBIX-What's In a Name-CD

JONATHAN FLOYD

- KURT/POPULAR SHAPES-split EP
- KNOCKOUT PILLS-1+1=Ate-LP
- WASTED-Heroes Amongst Thieves-LP
- THE ULCERS-Golden Showers-EP
- HOT SNAKES-Audit in Progress-LP & live
- THE MANHANDLERS-LP
- WRANGLER BRUTES-Zulu-LP
- CROOKS-City of Rats-EP
- THE OBSERVERS-live
- 400 BLOWS-live / HEROINE SHIEKS-live

JEFF HEERMANN

- ERASE ERRATA/NUMBERS-split EP
- ROGERS SISTERS-Three Fingers-LP
- THE ULCERS-Golden Showers-EP
- THE CHEIFS-Blues-EP
- KNOCKOUT PILLS-1+1=Ate-LP
- ROLLING BLACKOUTS-Black Is Beautiful-LP
- SPITZZ-Sick, Savage & Sensual-CD
- STRANGLERS-Apollo Revisited-2xLP
- V/A-The Best of Bomp Vol. 1-LP
- COACHWHIPS-live

KENNY KAOS

- KNOCKOUT PILLS-1+1=Ate-LP
- THE PUT-DOWNS-Corrupted-EP
- THE ULCERS-Golden Showers-EP
- CROOKS-City of Rats-EP
- THE FOUR SLICKS-Betty Lou-EP
- OUTNAUTS-Nightmare Cannot Be Erase-EP
- THE 5.6.7.8's-I'm Blue/I'm A Wild One-45
- WASTED-Heroes Amongst Thieves-LP
- THE MANHANDLERS-LP
- CRIMSON SWEET-Boulevard-EP

CAROLYN KEDDY

- THE MANHANDLERS-LP / FAT DAY-LP
- OUTNAUTS-EP / TRISTESS-CD
- THE FOUR SLICKS-Betty Lou-EP
- SHEMPS-Spazz Out with the Shemps-CD
- THE VON STEINS-Seconds/Hot Sex-45
- THE ULCERS-EP / KUNG FU USA-CD
- DEAD STOP-Down With You-LP
- OBSERVERS-live / WIRE-DVD
- The Motorcycle Diaries-film
- THE CLASH-Last Testament-DVD

RAY LUJAN

- WASTED-Heroes Amongst Thieves-LP
- VOICE IN THE WIRE-Signals In Transmission-CD
- DOA-Live Free or Die-CD
- TRAVOLTAS-The Highschool Reunion CD
- ERASE ERRATA/NUMBERS-split EP
- FLASHLIGHT ARCADE-CD / FINAL FOUR-CD
- STIV BATORS-Disconnected-CD
- SIT N' SPIN-Doin' Time With-CD
- LES HELL ON WHEELS-CD
- ANTI-FLAG-live / UK SUBS-live

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#148, 150-151, 153-154, 156 pts. 1 & 2, 159-163, 166, 168-172, 174-175, 178-181, 184-210, 214-227, 229-256 are as stated above in subscription info.
See page after next.

DEADLINES FOR NEXT ISSUE:
Scene Reports: continuously, with photos!
Interviews: continuously, with photos!
Ad Reservations: call to make sure.

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Issue out: by 2nd week of following month.

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1/6 page: (2 3/8-x 5") $30
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1/3 page square: (5-x 4 7/8") $100
1/2 page: (7 1/4-x 5") $150
Full page (7 1/4-x 10") $400

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(use this mainly for comments & letters. Use phone for ads & other business stuff)

MAXIMUMROCKNROLL

TOP 10

Please send us records (2 copies of vinyl, if possible–one for MRR and one for reviewer), or CD-only release. See records section for where to send tapes & CD-Rs.

ALLAN MCNAUGHTON

JE NE SAIS QUOI-We Make Beginnings-CD	V/A-Letters from the Landfill-LP
GREENLIGHT THE BOMBERS-CD	WASTED-Heroes Amongst Thieves-LP
HOT SNAKES-Audit in Progress-LP & live	FAT DAY-Unf! Unf!-LP
WRANGLER BRUTES-Zulu-LP	SCHOLASTIC DETH-Final Examiner-CD
KURT/POPULAR SHAPES-split EP	THE URINALS-live

GOLNAR NIKPOUR

VAN SAC-Ugly and Alive-EP	SIN DIOS/CONTRASTO-split EP
THE CHEIFS-Blues-EP	SKITKIDS/EXHALE-split EP
WRANGLER BRUTES-Zulu-LP	BURIAL-Touch and Go-EP
FORWARD-Burn Down the Corrupted Justice-LP	LAUKAUS-12"
V/A-The Best of Bomp Vol. 1-LP	DISCLOSE/NO FUCKER-live

DONNA POOLE

THE PUT-DOWNS-Corrupted-EP	THE MANHANDLERS-LP
DRUNKEN VENGEANCE BASTARD-EP	LAUKAUS-12"
THE VON STEINS-Seconds/Hot Sex-45	KNOCKOUT PILLS-1+1=Ate-LP
SUICIDE BLITZ-Ride the Steel-12"	DEAD STOP-Down With You-LP
WASTED-Heroes Amongst Thieves-LP	The Archbishop Dave "Smith" go away party

WILL RISK	MITCH CARDWELL
HOT SNAKES-Audit in Progress-LP	THE CHEIFS-Blues-EP
V/A-Letters from the Landfill-LP	KURT/POPULAR SHAPES-split EP
GÜNNA VAHM/FIGHT AMPUTATION-split EP	WRANGLER BRUTES-Zulu-LP
IMPERIAL LEATHER-Saving Seats-EP	CRIMSON SWEET-Boulevard-EP
MIKE WATT/AGAINST ME!/MONSTER TRUCKS-live	CRIME-live

BRUCE ROEHRS

CROOKS-City of Rats-EP	THE DEAD KINGS-I Just Can't Deicide-45
FORWARD-Burn Down the Corrupted Justice-LP	OUTNAUTS-Nightmare Cannot Be Erase-EP
DEAD STOP-Down With You-LP	INTERNAL AFFAIRS/LAST NERVE-split EP
ACTION-LP / LAUKAUS-12"	SUICIDE BLITZ-Ride the Steel-12"
FIGHTING CHANCE-Sacrifice and Struggle-LP	TUNNEL RATS/BEFORE I HANG/RANCID VAT-live

MIKE THORN

TRISTESS-CD / LAUKAUS-12"	LACK OF KNOWLEDGE-White Science-EP
DEAD STOP-LP / WASTED-LP	SKITKIDS/EXHALE-split EP
ACTION-LP / TOTAL VERLUST-LP	DRUNKEN VENGEANCE BASTARD-EP
V/A-Letters from the Landfill-LP	OUTNAUTS-Nightmare Cannot Be Erase-EP
THE MANHANDLERS-LP	LÄRM AS FUCK/HUMUS-split EP

RYAN WELLS

JE NE SAIS QUOI-We Make Beginnings-CD	THE ULCERS-Golden Showers-EP
KURT/POPULAR SHAPES-split EP	HOT SNAKES-Audit in Progress-LP
THE CHEIFS-Blues-EP	LAUKAUS-12"
THE 5.6.7.8's-I'm Blue/I'm A Wild One-45	THE MANHANDLERS-LP
THE VON STEINS-Seconds/Hot Sex-45	FAT DAY-Unf! Unf!-LP

ZINE TOP TEN

Cultor-Sore #16	Agitate #4
Pea #1	All Skewed Up #1
Rad Quibbs! #1	Blasphuny Pages #1
Round Things Roll #4	Modern Arizona #6
Trust #107	Move Your Ass #7

ZINE SHITWORKERS

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Jerry Booth
Tim Brooks
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Clint Chapman
Craig Ums
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#148/Sept '95. Soda Jerks, Toe Rag, Thorazine, Sacred Straight, Wizo, Opposition Party, Moody Jackson, Adversives, Opcion Crucial, Rebel, Rebel, Teen Idols, Walking Ruins.

#150/Nov '95. NY Loose, Snap-Her, Sick Boys, Splatterheads, Pipe, Pregnant Man, Final Conflict, Rawness, Stink, Goblins, Smellie Fingers.

#151/Dec '95. Lowdowns, My White Bread Mom, Queen B's, Electric Frankenstein, Turtlehead, Serpico, Trick Babys, In/Humanity, Stains, Varukers, Pist, Terrible Virtue.

#153/Feb '96. Snort, Hatchetface, Little Ugly Girls, ADZ, Oxymoron, NOTA, Stun Guns, Surfin' Turnips, Gutfiddle, Karen Monster, Dimestore Haloes.

#154/Mar '96. Motards, Subincision, Stisism, Donnas, Stallions, Count Backwards.

#156 pt 1/May '96. Public Toys, Crunch, Peter & The Test Tube Babies, Nails Of Hawaiian, Splash 4, Yawp!, Lifetime, Sickoids.

#156 pt 2/May '96. Australian Special: Beanflipper, Melancholy, Blitz Babiez, Crank, SubRosa, Mindsnare, TMT, H-Block, B-Sides, Fallout, Frenzal Rhomb, Lawnsmell, One Inch Punch, Chickenshit, No Deal.

#159/Aug '96. Smugglers, Tone Deaf Pig-Dogs, Too Many Records, Man Afraid, Blind Side, Vox Populi, Fun People, Fat, Drunk & Stupid, BrandNewUnit, Death Wish Kids.

#160/Sept '96. Automatics, Boycot, Toast, Morning Shakes, Mormons, John Q. Public, Sex Offenders, Ballgagger, Business, Apocalypse Babys, Good Riddance.

#161/Oct '96. Jet Bumpers, Steel Miners, Divisia, Lopo Drido, Red #9, Nothing Cool, Sink, Sires, Newtown Grunts.

#162/Nov '96. Phantom Surfers, Candy Snatchers, the Stain, National Guard, Torches To Rome, Restos Fosiles, Two Bo's Maniacs, Snuka, Redemtion 87, Torture Kitty.

#163/Dec '96. Last Sons of Krypton, Prostitutes, Wig Hat, Boys, Let It Rock, Enemy Soil, Vulcaneers, Half Empty, Zeros, Deadcats, Teen Idles.

#166/Mar '97. Walking Abortions, Hickey, '77 Spreads, Sanity Assassins, Cards In Spokes, Joey Tampon & The Toxic Shocks, Adjective Noun, Suicide King, Lenguas Armadas, Trauma, De Crew.

#169/June '97. Hand Skin, Cluster Bomb Unit, Jihad, Purgen, Speed Queens, Remission, Halflings, The Old Man, Deface.

#170/July '97. Bristle, Mine, Tedio Boys, The 4 Cockroaches, Absconded, Meanwhile. Broken, (Young) Pioneers, Hoodrat.

#171/Aug '97. Violent Society, Strychnine, Idiots, Knuckle Heads, Race Traitor, Patrick Grindstaff, Misanthropists.

#172/Sept '97. Withdrawals, Judgement, No Motiv, Oppressed Logic, Truents, Left For Dead, Yellowskin, Weird Lovemakers, Smash Your Face, Flatus, Straight Faced, Klaxon, X-It.

#174/Nov '97. Stratford Mercenaries, Lickity Split, Bladder, Piss Shivers, Barnhills, In/Humanity, Education theme issue.

#175/Dec '97. One Man Army, Those Unknown, Boiling Man, Piao Chong, Exploding Crustaceans, Last Year's Youth, Heartdrops, Dirty Burds, Dimestore Haloes.

#179/April '98. Boy Sets Fire, Tres Kids, Idyls, Spat & The Guttersnipes, The Posers, Explosive Kate, Douche Flag.

#180/May '98. Reinforce, Discontent, TV Killers, Slack Action, Eyeliners, Mademoiselle, MK Ultraviolence, Haulin' Ass, 97a, Infiltrators, Jack Saints, Stray Bullets.

#181/June '98. Grapefruit, Druggies, DDI, Bonecrusher, Normals, All Bets Off, Stiletto Boys, Summerjack, Cell Block 5.

#184/Sept '98. Absentees, Devoid of Faith, UXA, Ümlaut, Four Letter Word, Streetwalkin' Cheetahs, Ricanstruction, Libertine, Indecision, Snarkout Boys.

#185/Oct '98. Traitors, Wimpy Dicks, Armed & Hammered, Dylan McKays, NME, Tezacrifco, Worm, Roswells, Raxola, Beatnik Termites.

#186/Nov '98. Registrators, August Spies, Marilyn's Vitamins, Chinese Love Beads.

#187/Dec '98. Real Kids, Sawn Off, Cretins, Spider Cunts, Heroines, Third Party, No Class, Skabs.

#188/Jan '99. Stitches, Neighbors, Mansfields, Real Swinger, Marauders, Mark Bruback, Mars Moles, DOA.

#189/Feb '99. Monster X, Peter & the Test Tube Babies, Steam Pig, Maurauders, Yakuza, Dead Beat, Halfways, Hot Rod Honeys, DeRita Sisters.

#190/Mar '99. John Holstrom, Powerhouse, Brezhnev, Slappy, Black Pumpkin, Smartbomb ca, Wanda Chrome, Long Gones, Smogtown, Halfways, Tilt.

#191/April '99. Murder Suicide Pact, Kil Kare, Dudman, Super Hi-Fives, Better Than Elvis DJs, Pet Peeves, Loose Ends, Slingshot Episode.

#192/May '99. Los Crudos, Burning Kitchen, Henry Fiat's Open Sore, Polythene, Kangaroo Recs.

#193/June '99. Munster Recs, DS-13, Safety Pins, Pussycats, Piolines, False Alarm, Darlington, Bad Stain, Bodies, Houseboy, Mullets.

#194/July '99. Deathreat, Last Match, God Hates Computers, Fokkewolf, Flesh Eating Creeps, Aside, Hoppin' Mad, Kid Dynamite, Thee Outcasts.

#195/Aug '99. Moral Crux, RC5, Have Nots, Ill Tempered, Dysentery, Greg Higgins, Revlons, Larry & the Gonowheres..

#196/Sept '99. Hopscotch, Catharsis, Orchid, The Pricks, Grissle, Product X, Reaching Forward, Emerge, Third Degree, "Epicenter Zone '90-'99".

#197/Oct '99. Reducers SF, Lower Class Brats, Reactor 7, TheGodsHateKansas, Futuro Incierto, Showcase Showdown, Waifle, Flat Earth Recs.

#198/Nov '99. Hail Mary, Pressure Point, Bump 'N Uglies, The Victims, A//Political, Outlast

#199/Dec '99. Locust, Ratos de Porao, USV, Razlog Za, G-3, Swarm, WHN?, Mt. St. Helens, Black Cat Music, Enemy Soil.

#200/Jan '00. American Steel, Curse, Gee Vaucher, Hers Never Existed, Aaron Cometbus, Active distro, Toxic Narcotic, MRR catalogue #100-200.

#201/Feb '00. Beerzone, Towards An End, Daybreak, "Best Punk Singles of the '90s," the WTO riots in Seattle.

#202/March '00. KTMWQ, Real Estate Fraud, Strike Out, Broken Rekids, the Haggard, GC5, Gore Gore Girls, the Catheters.

#203/April '00. Spazz, Slang, *Slug & Lettuce* zine, *Suburban Voice* zine, As We Once Were, Red Angel Dragnet, Four Letter Words, Slampt Records, the Wednesdays, the Fuses.

#204/May '00. Cocksparrer, Talk Is Poison, Red Scare, Put Downs, Out Cold, Geraldine, Michael Knight, CBGaV, Pillage People.

#205/June '00. Punks With Kids special. Skudz, 50 Million, Legion, Wilbur Cobb, Coalition.

#206/July '00. Drunk, ESL, Ambition Mission, Lord High Fixers, Cripple Bastards, Dig Dug, Federation X, Amulet, Valentine Killers.

#207/Aug '00. Harum Scarum, Raw Power, Unseen, Pekinska Patka, Hudson Falcons, Dementia 13, Confine, Allergic to Whores.

#208/Sept '00. Le Shok, the Commies, the Chemo Kids, Day of Mourning, Affront, Diaspora, Whippersnapper, Hopeless/Sub City, Prank, Countdown to Oblivion

#209/Oct '00. Loose Lips, Godstomper, Peace of Mind, FYP, I Farm, Annalise, Cattle Decapitation, Riot/Clone.

#210/Nov '00. J Church, Profane Existence, Pezz, Pre-Teens, Templars, This Machine Kills, Subtonix, OB.

#214/Mar '01. Crispus Attucks, Fetish, Lifes Halt, Mr. Roboto, Dream Dates, Satan McNugget, Havoc, Briefs.

#215/April '01. No Means No, Vitamin X, Injections, Y, Dils, Last In Line, Don Austin, Deranged Records

#216/May '01. Propagandhi, Angelic Upstarts, Discordance Axis, Ruination, Photographer: Chris Boarts, Strap-Ons, Lynnards Innards

#217/June '01. Joey Ramone R.I.P., Tear It Up, Skitsystem, The Pattern, CrimethInc., Esperanza, The Chicago Blackout, Photographer: Ace

#218/July '01. Guyana Punchline, Les Sexareenos, The Devil Is Electric, Red Monkey, White Collar Crime, Forca Macabra, The Ataris, Suicide, The Mob

#219/Aug '01. "Fix It!" cycling article, Crucial Unit, Lost Sounds, Lombardies, Flowers in the Dustbin pt. 1, Casualties, Resinators, *P.U.N.K.*, Slaughter & the Dogs, Anti-Flag, Dontcares, S'Bitch.

#220/Sep '01. Latin American Issue. Aubuso Sonoro, Anti-Todo, Fuerza X, Apatia No, Manganzoids, Demencia, Sick Terror, Tocatta y Bulla, NTN, Argies, Reconcile, Anti-Korpus, Ruido De Odio, Los Pepiniyos, Rebelion Disidente, Brazil Scum , Kim Bae Photo Essay.

#221/Oct '01. Tales from the G8 Summit, Reflections, Soophie Nun Squad, Totalitär, True North, Wontons, Sin Dios, Bottles & Skulls, Scarred For Life, Flowers in the Dustbin pt. 2, Remains of the Day, Ritchie Whites, B'67.

#222/Nov '01. Dios Hastio, Tragedy, Four Letter Word, *Salad Days* author Charles Romalotti, Very Metal, Maurice's Little Bastards, the Rotters, MDC Brazilian tour diary, the Cravats, JR Ewing, Dutch scene report, extended news section, "Globalization Rhetoric & Reality,"

#223/Dec '01. "US Policy in the Middle East," "Revisiting 1948," Manifesto Jukebox, Good Riddance, Pokers, Viimenen Kolonna, Bluebloods, Vitamin X tour diary, Flakes, Pg. 99, the Mob, 7 Days of Samsara.

#224/Jan '02. "Legislation Since Sept. 11," Rendencion 9.11, Metro Youth, Severed Head of State, Piranhas, Paraf, Backstabbers, Inc, An Albatross, Citizen Fish Tour, SPAM Records, the Virus, Action Time.

#225/Feb '02. Lengua Armada, Breaker Breaker, 3 Yrs. Down, Scrotum Grinder, Turun Tauti, Flux Of Pink Indians, Holding On, Pauki, 86'd, See You In Hell, Red Light Sting, Nazis From Mars, Scare Tactic.

#226/Mar '02. Queer punk special issue. Vaseline, Quails, Skinjobs, Italian queer punk report, Vaginal Davis, Feelings on a Grid, Sissies, Scott Free, Dumba, Columns.

#227/Apr '02. Bellrays, Rhinos, Wasted, Kristofer Pasanen, Business, Assert, DS 13 tour report, Life Set Struggle, Iowaska, Zounds.

#229/June '02. Countdown To Putsch, The Awakening, Dave Hill Distribution, Holier Than Thou, Kill Devil Hills, Sound Of Failure, E.T.A., Nubs, Les Baton Rouge, New Disorder Records, Career Suicide, Swellbellys, The Sinyx.

#230/July '02. Bitchin', Redencion 911, Phantom Limbs, Secretions, Holy Molar, Sharp Knife, Mighty John Waynes, A Global Threat, Groovie Ghoulies, Reproach, Annie Anxiety.

#231/Aug '02. Epoxies, Puppy Vs. Dyslexia, Koro, Blocko, Amdi Petersen's Armé, Piss & Vinegar Zine, Schizophrenic Records, Toys That Kill, Give Us Barabbas, Dirt.

#232/Sept '02. "No Future" article, Lost, Fartz, Sell Outs, Razors Edge, Stakeout, Dillinger Four, All or Nothing HC, Fleshies, Bridge Nine Records, Akashic Books, Liberty.

#233/Oct '02. "All Ages" article, Scholastic Deth, Runnamucks, Sinners & Saints, Panic, Gasolheads, Jewws, Futures, Michael Landon's Commandos, Storm the Tower, Against Me!, Balance of Terror, Class Assassins, Spazm 151.

#234/Nov '02. Snobs, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour, The Oath, Radio 4, Feederz, Charm City Suicides, Selfish, Riot 99, End On End, Peawees, Born/Dead.

#235/Dec '02. Anti-war Special Issue. Anti-war guest columns. Anti-war scene reports. Articles: "Reading for Democracy," "War on Iraq?" "Unfinished American Revolution," Resource Guide, "US Involvement in Iraq,""Axis of Empire." Long Island DIY Scene, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour part 2, Smalltown, Kylesa, Crash & Burn.

#236/Jan '03. Mr. California & State Police, Iron Lung, Riff Randells, Chainsaw, *Artcore*, Latterman, Travis Cut, Phenomenauts, Pretty Little Flower, X-Cretas.

#237/Feb '03. Top Ten Records of 2002, "Music as a Weapon: Artists in Wartime," Dirt Bike Annie, Let It Burn, Stockyard Stoics, King Khan & Shrines, 625 Records, Feast Or Famine, Rudimentary Peni, Coachwhips, Self Defense.

#238/Mar '03. World Burns To Death, Chronics, Vilently Ill, Dystopia, Pilger, Exotic Fever, Brezhnev, R.A.M.B.O., Blown To Bits, Put To Shame, Deconditioned, This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb, Monsters.

#239/Apr '03. Romanian D-beat, Meconium Records, Amazombies, Abandoned Hearts Club, Mike V. & the Rats, Nicki Sicki, Bigamists, Bolivia article, Negatives, Kuolema, Defiance.

#240/May '03. I Quit, Apers, Headless Horsemen, Lesser of Two, Barse, Nightmare, Music Zine Roundtable, Exploding Hearts, Flesh Packs, Blacklist Brigade.

#241/June '03. Tyrades, Lumbergh, The Stand By Me, New Mexican Disaster Squad, Cut the Shit, Libertinagem, 17th Class, the Ends, He Who Corrupts, Deathbag, Cria Cuervos.

#242/July '03. Pensacola and San Francisco punk protest reports, John Wilkes Booze, Anfo, Bob Suren, Migra Violenta, Jackson 8, *Snakepit* zine, Krigshot, the Rites, Deadfall.

#243/Aug '03. "Media Alliance and the FCC," Striking Distance, Malcontents, Invisible City, Books Lie, Charm City Art Space, Hopeless Dregs of Humanity, I Shot Cyrus, Sunday Morning Einsteins, What the Kids Want, Onion Flavored Rings.

#244/Sept '03. None More Black, Deadline, Rai Ko Ris, Boxed In, Exploding Hearts, Raving Mojos, Blackout Terror, Morticia's Lovers, Thee Fine Lines, *Trust* zine.

#245/Oct '03. No Time Left, Riistetyt, Intense Youth, The Gimmies, Ass End Offend, Artimus Pyle, La Fraction, Kung Fu Rick, The Horror.

#246/Nov '03. Punk & Resistance in Israel, Letters from Palestine, No Choice, FM Knives, Bury the Living, Marked Men, The Dirty Burds, Provoked.

#247/Dec '03. DSB, The Boils, Popular Shapes, Phoenix Foundation, Bathtub Shitter, Meet the Virus, Cropknox, "Punk Babies on Tour" Article.

#248/Jan '04. Discharge, Superhelicopter, Jed Whitey, Black Friday '29, Find Him And Kill Him, The Lids, Impratical Cockpit, Face Up To It, History Of Maximum Rocknroll Radio.

#249/Feb '04. From Ashes Rise, Hagar the Womb, This Is My Fist, Skip Jensen, Gride, Katy Otto/Mike Taylor Dialogue, John Yates, Pointing Finger.

#250/Mar '04. Best Records of 2003, Miami FTAA protests, Clorox Girls, FIYA, "La Villita: Chicago Pilsen Scene," Terminus Victor, Restarts, Damage Done, Knights of New Crusade.

#251/April '04 The Fuse!, Väkivaltaa, Modern Machines, Microcosm, Migra Violenta Euro tour diary, Allegiance, Neurotic Swingers, Xavier Lepaige Photos, Le Scrawl,Vrah

#252/May '04 Fucked Up, Firestarter, Inepsy, Laukaus, Great Clearing Off, Radio Reelers, Extreme Noise Records, 46 Short, The State, John The Baker, Free Verse, Chrystaei Branchaw photos, SE Asia, Germany, Ireland.

#253/June '04 Sweet J.A.P., Gorilla Angreb, Vöetsek, Minority Blues Band, Scruvy Dogs, Molotov Cocktail, Kidnappers, Schifosi, King Ly Chee, YDI, Texas, Germany, UK, New Hampshire

#254/July '04 No Hope For The Kids, Dropdead, Diskords, Breakfast, Asschapel, I Excuse, Strung Up, To Hell & Back, Four Eyes, Lamant, Gammits MW, Portland, Boston, Germany

#255/August '04 Punks Not Dead, Reagan Is Special Issue. Leatherface, Get It Away, The Hatepinks, Keen Monkey Work, New York City, South Dakota, Czech Republic, Philippines, Russia.

#256/September '04 The Observers, Witchhunt, Annihilation Time, Zann, Eskapo, FxPxO, Haymarket Riot, Fourth Rotor, Les Georges Lenigrad, Texas scene, Newfoundland scene, Indiana scene, and England scene.

#257/October '04 Tne Election Issue, Jesse Townley, Matt Gonzalez, Rattus, Fighting Dogs, Hero Dishonest, Kickz, The Boss Martians, Reactionary Three, Slovakia, Australia, South Wales, South East Asia, and more!

#258/November '04 Career Suicide, Cathy Wilkerson of the Weather Underground, No Fucker, The Repos, Dominatrix, Ashtray, Deadstop, Midnight Creeps, Michale Graves, The Diffs, The Shemps, Abi Yo Yo's.

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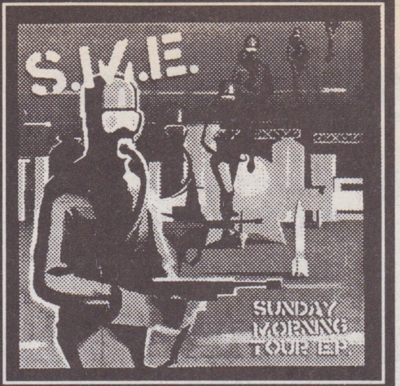

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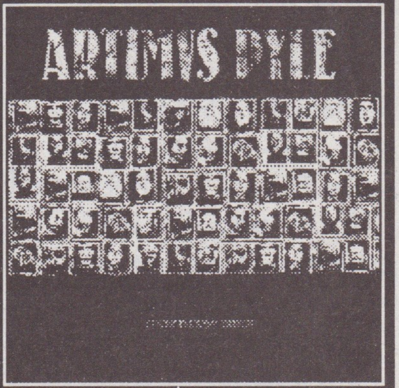

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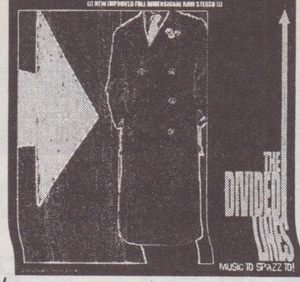

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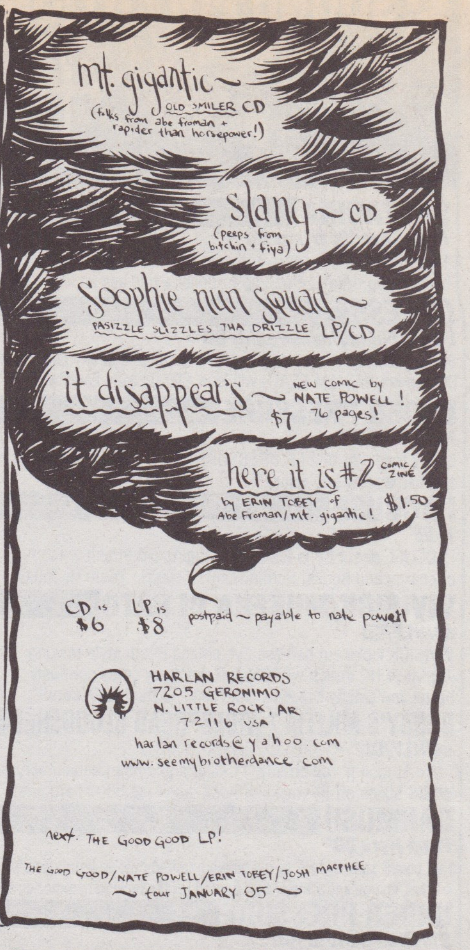

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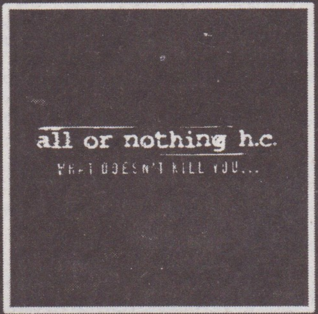

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LETTERS

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Dearest *MRR* and los punks,

Moved to Tucson, AZ a month ago. I wanted to get away from the hustle that is Oakland life. I figured I needed some alone time, and, seeing as how I know one (1) person here, this was the place to be. I was wrong. I now know that I like being crowded by my comrades. Shit, I had to move away to find out I didn't want to move away! Stupid! So, I've been riding my bike a lot and spending hours in the library. In my isolation I fear I may become a weird library dweller!

I arrived here on September 6th with 1300 hundred bucks guessing that it would stretch and keep me fed for two months. Nah. I started looking for work today. My bar punk past drained me.

Yeah, so in a town with a punk record shop (the famous Toxic Shock) and an all-ages punk venue I expected to find the punks easily, embarrass myself with introductions and then have some companions. Alas, this city does have an abundance of punkers but I just don't communicate effectively with dozens of high school kids with bad mohawks, Exploited shirts, and Casualties butt flaps. Call me elitist, but I like my music DIY and black-clad warrior-esque.

That's all. I am bored and lonely enough to give out my phone number. Maybe some Tucsonians will call!

MRR, I trust CrimeDog is doing a great job on reviews and Golnar is rockin' the house down. Remember how important 'zines like *Maximum* are to us out in the wasteland that is the Sonoran desert.

Contact me at:520 358-3146.

Skrappys (the all-ages punk spot): 520 358-4287

hate and eyeliner,
—Jake Filth
811 N. 7th Ave.
Tucson, AZ. 85705

MRR—

Once again in the interest of weathering the current punk climate of backlashes and post-this and "PC" that, *MRR* misses the point and the problem. I'm referring to Carl Cordova's review of the FUCKED UP/HAYMAKER 7" in the last issue, where he focuses on the music and not the content. Didn't anyone read the FU interview in *MRR*? A band that so calmly flirts with fascist social organization and hierarchy should at least warrant some uplifted eyebrows—but then to construct such a blatantly offensive and deleterious record cover that widely hasn't yet been cause for any questioning? Did everyone just fall into the trap hook line and sinker? The utility and (un) originality of using Nazi images aside, the way the two themes of the record are used is really fucking uncool—do people *still* need to be re-reminded of the links made by the Nazi scum between Jews and rats (which take up half the design of this EP)???? As far as I'm concerned, FUCKED UP was walking on thin ice before this record was released. Now it should be quite obvious what side of the fence this fucks have placed themselves on, replete with their tattooed, arm-banded, salivating and dogmatic non-thinking fans/subjects.

Yours,
Richie Dagger.
drs03@uow.edu.au

MRR—

Alright boys and girls, I've had enough! Enough of what, you ask. Well, I'll tell ya. I'm not going to name names and all that shit, the guilty will know who they are.

Now over the past couple of months, I've read several different zines, including *MRR*, and I've read something that's just not right. During several people's letters and or review of things, they are disrespecting the old time punk rock. Using such words as "has beens," "washed up," "weak reunion tours," etc.

I mean, these cats are talking about the motherfuckers who paved the way for all these new wave bands we got now. Yeah dudes, new wave. I won't go through the long list of bands that these dudes are kicking dirt on, but just think, 60s, 70s, and 80s!

We should be thankful that these older punk bands are still doing shows. Maybe they do not have new songs or whatever! But the old tunes are fucking timeless folks. I will admit that a few, just a few of these bands went a little commercial, but not all of them.

I read reviews on bands now that are always compared to the old punk rock bands. These guys got a sound like "so-and-so", etc. And you know what? There's nothing fuckin' wrong with that either. We've all grown up with these old school bands, they gave hope, encouraged us, and gave us punk fucking rock!

I love old school punk as well as the not-so-old school punk rock, but none of these bands would have had any fucking direction with the older punk bands. When I can get to shows, I'm not going to see these guys at big stadiums or Warped Tours and such. If they've some lame tag-a-long band, who cares, I'm there to see them and fucking happy about it.

These offensive comments that are being made, the idiots making them are not directly lashing out at these bands, but just throwing the comments in with whatever else they may be talking about. Remember when your running mouth about stuff, everything you say is heard.

One last thing, when you're making comments about the forefathers of punk rock, go look at your record, tape or CD collection and ask yourself, who came first, who's still there and who introduced you to the great life of punk rock!

—Justin Time

MRR—

I am reading some of *MRR* issue #255. Has any mention been in any of the *MaximumRockNRoll* issues about the considerable rise in the police force of the U.S. and people being put or thrown into prisons during the Clinton years? It would be interesting comparing this to Reagan. Thanx.

John Huddleston
heavy.one@netzero.com

Howdy Bill and *MRR*—

Wow! This is probably the first time in twenty-one years that I am writing in to MRR in response to a column! Way to go, Bill!

All things considered, your *MRR* column in October 2004 about Against Me was very poorly researched. Much of it is libelous, outside of your personal opinions. Your opinions are totally yours: no problem there. You should totally write what you want about your opinions in *MRR*. However, the

sections about the way an Against Me tour functions (and the money breakdown) were completely fabricated. Total libel. Do a little research: one phone call or email could have corrected the glaring inaccuracies.
For Example:
1.) *Reinventing Axl Rose* just hit 30,000 last month. That's a year after the Fat album came out.
2.) Against Me has always split the door money evenly with the other bands on tour with them. (Local opening bands are paid a lesser amount, which is the norm.)
3.) No Idea paid not one cent for Grabass Charlestons (or any other band) to tour with Against Me. Against Me picks the bands they tour with themselves and have not accepted bribes to do so. Against Me often take smaller Gainesville bands out on tour with them. They pay them more that anyone could possibly expect.
Another example: Against Me brought over No Choice from Wales, UK. They did a tour with them and Planes Mistaken For Stars. At the end of the night, they split the money three ways. I do not know of one other band of Against Me's size that splits the door money evenly with the other bands on tour with them, regardless of the individual bands' popularity. Or cares so much about bringing their friends out on tour with them, be they in big bands or small.
4.) Against Me have been asked by Hot Topic several times to sell them their shirts. It would be really easy money. Against Me declined.
5.) Against Me has not played the Warped Tour, actually.
6.) Creed broke up. You'll have to find a new favorite band.

If you replaced the band name "Against Me" with another band name, your column would very likely have been accurate. That shit does happen. Labels do pay to get their bands on bigger tours. Quite frankly, I am insulted that you would attempt to implicate No Idea (by insinuation) in such a crappy scheme. For one, that shit makes me want to puke. For two, we ain't got that kind of money to play those games. It is possible that you did not mean to implicate us. Either way, your column was in poor taste, badly researched, and insulting. (Yes, the irony of that last sentence being written in regard to a column in a "punk" zine does not escape me.) Bad boy. Wash your mouth out with soap. Go to your room.
Take care!
—Var / No Idea records.
noidea@noidearecords.com

MRR and Bill Florio—

It may have only been a two bit/one sided view from Mr. Florio with regards to Against Me and all that goes with them, their music and Fat Wreck, but I cant help posting this response, to put him and others in the picture. First up, we (No Choice) are good friends with Against Me and have been since they toured the UK with us in 2003. We had a blast and they said as a way of gratitude for the good time we showed them they would make sure we got over to the states in 2004 and do a tour with them, what they didn't say was that they would take care of everything else!! Just get your flights and get over here, *no agents ! No corperate bullshit* ! Just an amazing gesture! Your "guess" that we had to pay them between $10-15,000 to get on the tour was.....just that! A guess!

I will also point out that our good friends Planes Mistaken For Stars also hitched a ride on that tour and each and every night the bands money from that gig would be split equally three ways, us and Planes were amazed by Against Me's genuine friendship and generosity, nothing shady there then and as far as I know, no opening bands paid anything to play, I saw many of them get paid and we had no problem, along with Planes when taking a lesser cut along with Against Me to make sure they got paid!

You make some good points about the bullshit that wraps itself around punk tours these days but then add Against Me to the mix, when I feel they really don't deserve this, as the band you make them out to be…they clearly are not!!! It came across like some sad little fuck that was pissed that a local band didn't play this particular gig. Whilst I sit here recalling that gig, I 'm struggling to remember the gig being cut short because of your stink bombs, a short stop for a guitar problem and a great end to the show with Andrew up high at the back of the stage and kids stage diving, so no victory for you there I'm afraid ! Justin had a point! You just fuckin' missed it boy! The point is when you throw stones, make sure you hit the right target!
—Gagz, No Choice

Hi Bill Florio,

Dolf here from *Trust* zine in Germany, just finished reading your column and like it! The problem is that a cultural change has happend and mainstream adapted some punk fashion but left the content (of course). So alot of "these" people do think they are punk, even though they are not, but how do you communicate that (to them) or to some of the kids... since the audience at vans warped & co are not punk and are not interested in changing their life. Their punk is about consuming...It is really frustrating to see all these clowns... not sure if stink bombing will help, it certainly is a lot of fun. Luckily there are still some very cool bands/people out there, as always, but of course they are hard to find with all that other crap... anyway, basically I just wanted to say I liked your column. We are writing against all this shit since years and it grows and grows....
Cheers,
Dolf Hermannstaedter
dolf@is-bremen.de

Maxi Rocker,

You know what has been pissing me off lately...all of the un-punk shit punk rockers do nowadays. I'm not talking about the shit you can't help like getting a job, going to school, or not taking part in a running riot. I'm talking about weak ass shit you know is un-punk & fucking lame. Sure, there aren't rules to being punk, but there is definitely shit the enemy, the old, & the lame partake in. How punk are you for rubbing elbows with them?

Watching Sports: What the fuck is up with punks who like sports? Let me tell you, if you can forgive asshole jocks enough to watch sports, you weren't fucked by them enough to ever be considered punk. If you like sports so much buy a fucking skateboard & get off your couch you fucking poser. Jocks are the enemy, so thanks a lot for stroking the egos of the overpaid people who fucked with punks (when it was somewhat punk to be punk), beat up gays, teased the nerds, & mistreated any social misfit while they were in high school.

God Loving Straight Edge: It's a fucking shame that when you're dad goes to the golf course, has a beer with his lodge buddies, and then fucks his secretary, he is being more rebellious than his kid who is supposed to be punk. I'm not saying it's cool to be a drunk or a drug addict, because it's not cool. By the way you can abstain from doing drugs & alcohol without being straight edge. Straight Edge is a crutch just as bad as drugs, except drugs are fun, & being straight edge is not.

Playing Golf: I don't care if you're Fat Mike or that pussy in the VANDALS (that put out the golf punk zine) & you have done a whole bunch of cool/important shit, but if you play golf you're not punk anymore. Golf is for the old, & for people who like to own slaves, meaning rich, white, and Republican. Fat Mike probably hates George Bush so much because George Bush probably has a better golf score. On the other hand, Fat Mike probably gives George Bush's campaign fund a portion of his records sales, since he wouldn't have quite as much profit if it wasn't for his being the pioneer of jumping on the "I hate George Bush" bandwagon. On another golfing celebrity side note—fuck Tiger Woods that big-time cheap-ass who doesn't like to tip waiters & waitresses. Tiger Woods is famous for being on the shit list of service industry types in the valley, which in turn assures him to find a nice loogie in each meal he eats in Vegas. So props to you two, Fat Mike and Tiger Peckerwood, you are now part of the elite society of golfers who wish it was the good old days, so that they could spit on one of you, and send the other one out to fields to pick some cotton. The only time a punk should have a golf club in their hands is to beat a nazi skinhead over the head with it, like I once did.

Death Skull, Confederate Flags, Iron Crosses, & listening to Skrewdriver: These are not cool symbols, maybe you think you're funny because you like some crappy band like Social Distortion or Tiger Army, but I remember a few years back when we wouldn't of thought twice about curb checking some sucker with a confederate flag patch, but now punks have somewhat accepted them. Yuck & shame on you. Also, I hear a lot of kids saying Skrewdriver wasn't always racist so it's okay to like their first album, well no shit, most racists weren't always racist. How about you book a show for a White Power band in your local venue, because at one time they were children & they weren't racist until someone taught them to hate.

Going To One Punk Show A Year: I think it's lame when old punks go to one show a year & then all they do is bitch that every band sucks. Of course bands seems to suck when you're not in the know, being in the know is punk & since your not in the know go back to your house in Green Valley & listen to your shitty Gang Green album, that I thought sucked then, & I think it sucks even more now. Save your concert going for other has-beens like your self like Billy Idol, Blondie, The Damned, or X. I can name twenty bands that came out with in the last couple of years that smoke the Anti Nowhere League. On yet another side note, I do think it's very important to embrace our older/essential bands & shame on the kids that don't. Also, if I hear one more over the hill punk call some band emo they have never heard of I'm gonna barf. *You're* emo for being sad that your wife is a bitch & your kids are little assholes & you'd rather be drinking beer & $7 bottles of vodka with me & having a bisexual threesome with me & the Bethanator while listening to Limp Wrist.

Punk Guys Dating Abercrombie & Fitch chicks I fucking hate when I see a punk guy date some shallow preppie bitch who thinks it's cool to date a punk guy because it's rebellious. I've heard the same song & dance so many times "dude, she's hot." I think a fat chick with a Septic Death T-shirt is hotter & if you put a thermometer to a fat girls blubber you will see the temperature actually is hotter than the skinny girl's. All joking aside, I don't think I could even stand to have a conversation with someone who isn't on my wavelength. I'm not saying you have to date a punk girl or boy, but holy crap, thats the kind of fuck who would of crapped on you in the 80s. So fuck off, this isn't the movie *Pretty in Pink*.

I have more stuff that pisses me off, but the Bethanator says I can't play on the computer any more & that I have to go down on her & fist her. By the way, the other day I accidentally sent you an email that was intended for my friend who I always bicker back and forth with about Sri Lankan hard core, as well as him being a white asshole. I meant to send you a really funny letter about me being a Camel Jockey punk rocker, but somehow they got mixed up. I guess that kind of shit happens when you drink four tall cans of Coors Light & 3/4 a bottle of Moskovskaya Vodka.
See Yah In The Pit or At The Bar,
Karl Bakla
lasvegashardcore@aol.com

PS. It is punk to own a Cuisinart coffee maker, even though a Mr. Coffee maker is $140 cheaper . . . It has a fucking water filtration system and a permanent gold tone filter! Fuck yeah! Email me for more details!

Glorious Revolutionary Federation of Fortune 500 Killers—

Frankly, I was amazed when you wrote for the recent *MRR* article that you "will debate anywhere in any form" about why progressive, free-thinking people shouldn't vote for Kerry. It was especially shocking to read that you think voting for Kerry makes one a shill for, among other things, homophobia.

Bottom line. There are some very *old* people on the Supreme Court. It's been sheer luck none of them retired or died in Bush's 1st term.

Bush has said the three justices he most admires are Rehnquist, Thomas, and Scalia...not coincidentally the only three justices who were insane enough to vote that it was totally *okay* for Texas to enforce sodomy laws by breaking into the home of a gay man and arresting him and his partner for having homosexual sex in the privacy of their bedroom.

I urge you to read the decisions of Rehnquist, Thomas, and Scalia. Do it. http://www.supremecourtus.gov/

Read Scalia's dissenting opinion in Lawrence Vs. Texas.
http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/26jun20031200/www.supremecourtus.gov/opinions/02pdf/02-102.pdf

No matter what you think of Kerry...the President of the USA nominates the Justices of the Supreme Court. We can't get around that fact. Do you even possibly imagine in your wildest dreams that Massachusetts Liberal John Kerry would ever put judges on the Supreme Court even remotely similar to rabid, extreme, ultra-right-wing maniacs Scalia, Rehnquist, and Clarence Thomas?

The answer is a flat out *no*.

Whether you like it or not, Kerry is the only one with a snowball's chance in hell of beating Bush. If anyone votes for Nader, and Bush gets another 4 years, Bush will most certainly, without question, be the President to appoint the next 2 and possibly even 3 Supreme Court justices. Bush already announced he'll appoint more men like Scalia, Rehnquist, and Thomas. Isn't it clear voting for Kerry is the only choice?

Whether you like it or not the Supreme Court has direct control over our lives. So if I am wise about it, and have any sense of self-preservation, I must come to the realization that no queer person like myself has any choice except to vote for Kerry and encourage anyone and everyone to do the same. "Anybody but Bush," in this case is hardly idiocy, but practical wisdom. Bush can't be allowed to get his choices onto the Supreme Court. It's the single most important reason to get Kerry in there.

Because the next justices who get onto the Supreme Court alongside *will* have a direct impact on our lives...probably for the majority of the rest of our lives.
Sincerely,
—Tony Arena
AKA Anonymous Boy, *MaximumRocknRoll* Columnist

Hey *MRR*—

I live in Seattle WA, and folx here just got some pretty fucked up news. I don't know what your policy on poetry is, but this piece is pretty relevant.

On Wednesday Sept 15. 2nd Ave. Pizza held their last show, announcing to a packed house that they were being evicted. A staple in the punk community for 2 yrs. now, they were the last All Ages venue in the city where those of us of age could still drink a beer with the guarantee of great music. Though their eviction was allegedly due to "lack of bill payment," it has come to my attention that the city has big plans for the building in which they were housed. You do the math. This venue, and its consistent support of our growing community, marked a moment in history that should not be ignored.
—MaudlinJane
Scribble Squat, Seattle WA.

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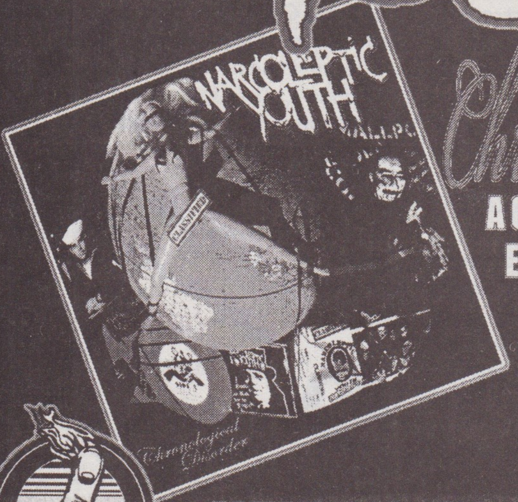

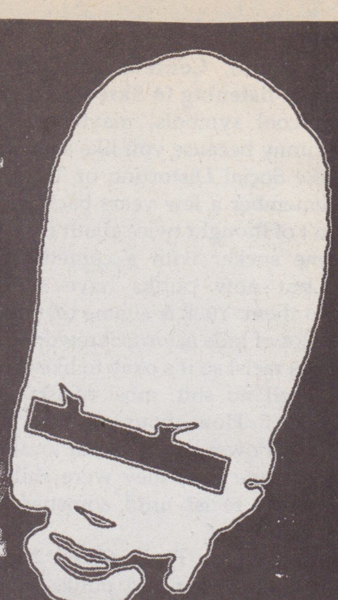

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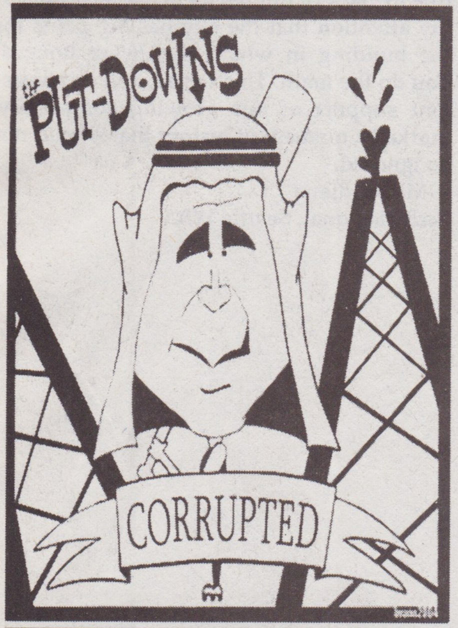

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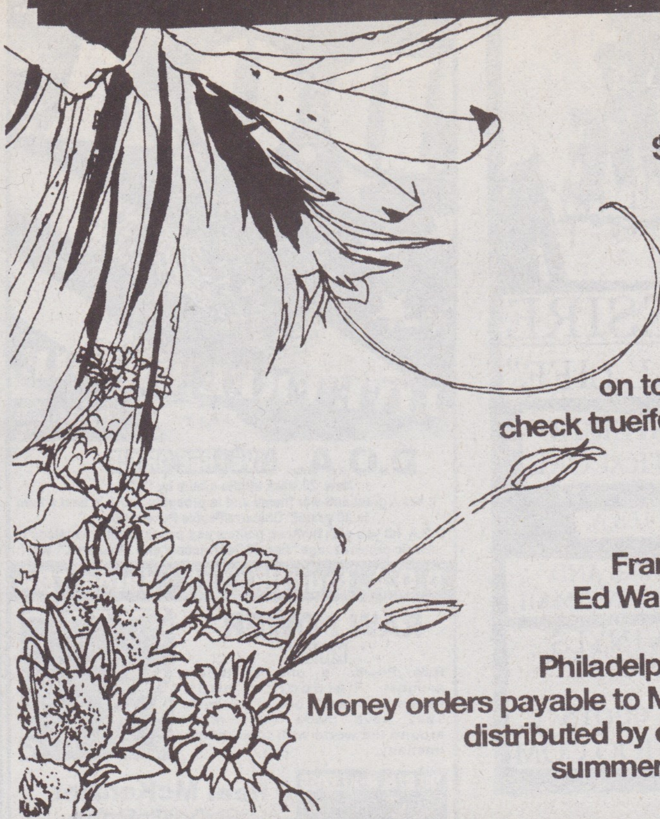

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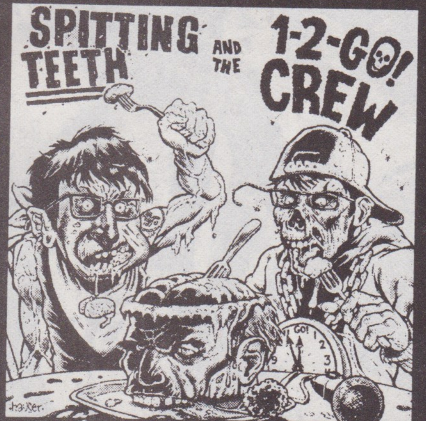

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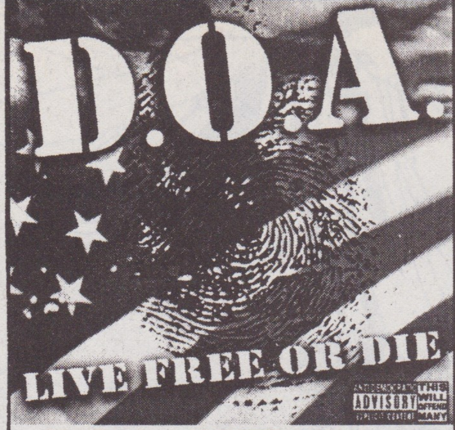

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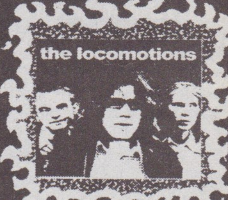

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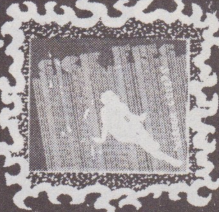

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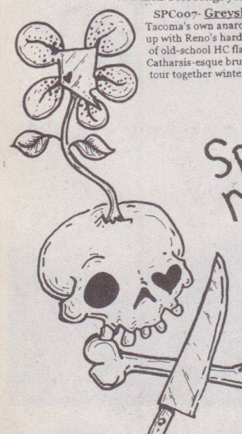

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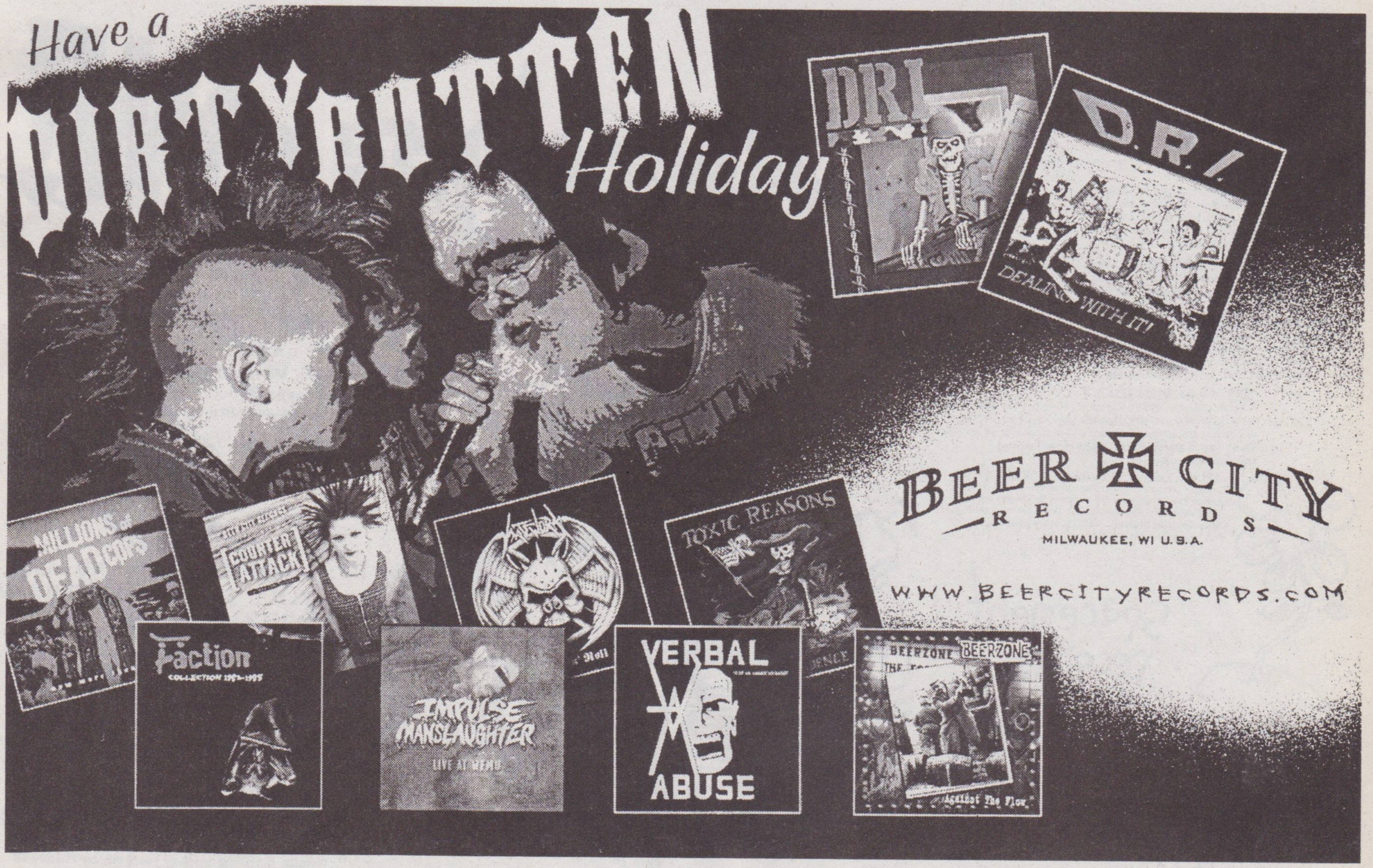
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COLUMNS

ARROGANT BASTARD
MANTOOTH

Gone Postal

That the life of an *MRR* columnist, comparable to a higher form of existence, would demand answering above and beyond the call of duty should not come to surprise to anyone. Yes, holding this lofty position often means answer the queries of those lost in the giant corn maze of questions regarding life, love, and finance. This maze is often filled with ghosts and goblins hankering to give you a right frightening. And so, I must knock these ghoulish clowns to the earth with a mighty wallop of my turgid brain. This duty, of course, is nothing new to a man who has lived his whole life as a retainer of great knowledge and wisdom. People recognize my genius, as it flows from every pore of my knowledge-apparatus—also known as my "body." Thus, the masses come pounding on my door, tugging at my coat-tails, and offering themselves to my knowledge-apparatus for some form of guidance; they yearn for answers in this crazy, mixed up, post-9/11 world where up is down, sideways is both ways, dogs walk cats, and record labels charge $18 for domestically shipping LPs. Yes, this certainly is a horrible Orwellian age that the punx of the 80s and VOIVOD often warned us about, but did we listen? I did. But many of you did not. So I am left with bags upon barrels of letters from a bunch of sniveling pansies pleading for some sort of guidance in this aforementioned terrible something or other age.

Dear Mantooth,

Do you think you're funny or something? I read on the internet that you are a "fairy." Is this true?

-Little Suzy Smith, Asheville, TN

Well, Suzy, I'll start with your second question, since it is a little less complicated. I also read this on the internet, so I quickly made an appointment with my physician. Upon reading this accusation, I became sincerely afraid that I had been ignoring some part of my anatomy that would have tipped me off years ago as to whether I was human or part of a magical fantasy world. If I had latent powers that would allow me to fly and exchange cash for their teeth, I wanted to know how to awaken these gifts. A few days went by before I could see him (Thank you very much, Mr. President!), by which time my hair had become severely frazzled and my eyes darted back and forth incessantly, chasing objects that were not really there. I lived in a paranoid haze. Every time a bell rang, I thought it would be the end for dear old Mantooth! But the doctor took one look at me, by this time uncontrollably wetting myself, and assured me that I was not destined for a life with the Lost Boys or mining fairy-dust from the noses of giants. He also diagnosed me with mild retardation. So I guess that answers both of your questions. No I am not funny. And as of yet, I am not a fairy.

Dear Mantooth,

Do you know that snails have teeth? Isn't that fucking weird?

-Little Joey Johnson, Buffalo, NY

Of course I know this, Little Joey. Did you know that if grasshoppers are hungry enough, they will eat the paint off your house? Yep. Also, centipedes are carnivores. Sleep tight, asshole.

Dear Mantooth,

What do the stars say about my future?

-Little Bobby Bonnit, Athens, GA

The stars say that Venus ascending in your sign may sound sexy, but it's really just a function of its orbit. Don't get all excited. Also, the stars admit that they don't know a whole lot about this record collecting business. But something about "reissuing" a record to 500 copies, when it was already insanely limited when it first came out, seems a little…silly? Oh those smarmy stars! Will they ever learn?

Dear Mantooth,

You know that Johnny Werzner kid—the kid who delivers papers in the neighborhood? He's a fine kid. Some of the neighbors say he smokes crack, but I don't believe it. Anyway, for his 10th birthday, all he wanted was a burrow owl, just like his old man. "Dad, get me a burrow owl. I'll never ask for anything else as long as I live". So the guy breaks down and buys him a burrow owl. Anyway at 10:30 the other night I go out into my yard and there's the Werzner kid looking up in the tree. I said, "What are you looking for?" he said, "I'm looking for my burrow owl." I say, "Jumping Jesus on a pogo stick. Everybody knows that a burrow owl lives in a hole in the ground. Why the hell do you think they call it a burrow owl, anyway?" Now Mantooth, do you think a kid like that is gonna know what the queers are doing to the soil?

—Little Sammy Samson, Des Moines, Iowa

Well, Sammy, I first became aware of this about ten years ago, the summer my oldest boy, Bill Jr. died. You know that carnival comes into town every year? Well this year they came through with a ride called The Mixer. The man said, "Keep your head, and arms, inside the Mixer at all times." But Bill Jr, he was a DAAAREDEVIL, just like his old man. He was leaning out saying "Hey everybody, Look at me! Look at me!" Pow! He was decapitated! They found his head over by the snow cone concession!

Dear Mantooth,

Don't you think it's a little pretentious to reference bands, music, and literature that not everyone reading this magazine may be familiar with? What makes you think that everyone reading your smarmy little column uses the same frame of reference? Aren't you afraid that someone, unfamiliar with The Dead Milkmen, will construe your blatant attempt to fill up space as you actually believing homosexuals affect the soil adversely, and that they are building landing strips for gay Martians? Or will you take the easy way out and proclaim that all those not in your precious in-group "posers?"

—Mantooth, Pittsburgh, PA

Lo! The author referencing himself and his own work! How post-modern! It seems as though *I* am the only one worthy of challenging me. *I* against *I*, if you will. Ho, ho! I bet Old Man Joyce is spinning in his sarcophagus as I write this! Well, I refuse to answer to myself. Chalk that up to being juvenile. Also, chalk this up to being juvenile—LEFTOVER CRACK is possibly the worst band in existence. Why do people like this band? I personally would rather have my night revolve around eating some sort of pot-pie, watching *Commando* or *Robo-Cop*, and masturbating silently into a napkin than listen to any LEFTOVER CRACK record. The three activities aren't necessarily related. Or are they? This is the mystery of the post-modern.

Dear Mantooth,

This column isn't turning out to be very funny. You should talk some more shit.

—Little Debbie Debson, Tokyo, Japan

There's this guy running around the Bay

Area calling himself "Sweet Tooth." Well, Sweet Tooth is not his real name. His real name is Dan. So if you meet this guy, who most likely will not be wearing shoes, don't listen to his wild yarns about being handed this name from a man sitting atop a giant mushroom.

Dear Mantooth,

What are your thoughts on the upcoming election? Who are you voting for?

—Little Henrietta Henrikson, Latveria, Europe

Sorry to break it to you, Henrietta, but your beloved Mantooth refuses to entertain this silly farce of an election. Now before I get a bunch of angry letters and smarmy telegrams telling me that I am a lazy American and that I am really voting for Bush, let me bring the following facts to your miserable attention: A) It's my fucking birthday. B) On one's birthday, everyone must treat the birthday-boy with respect and/or shower him with delicious cakes and compliments. C) In America, general elections between Democrats and Republicans produce no losers. Mostly because in America, there are no losers. But more so because corporate interests are ultimately fulfilled no matter what, everyone gets fucked in the end, I can't get no Tang 'round here, etc., etc. Let's further cloud my rhetoric with this clever analogy; the other day I was arguing with my friend that my copy of the movie "Predator" was better than his exact same copy of the movie "Predator." If two things are exactly the same, there is no way for one to be better than the other. Unless, of course, it is my copy of the movie "Predator" and not yours. This brings me to the point I've been trying to make all along; all politicians are aliens with blood the color of anti-freeze and hunt the most dangerous prey of all—man!

Anyway, I think I've come up with a plan that will pretty much do away with the presidency; that is if you godforsaken plebeians ever wake up and smell what the Mantooth is cooking. I think our only solution is a violent revolution; a revolution so bloody that the survivors will need some manner of rubber booties to wade through the resulting blood and gore formerly known as our nation's infrastructure and democratically elected politicians. After the bodies are cleared off the streets and nation is rebuilt, a dog should be elected as sole ruler of the country. Not just any dog, mind you. How can I say this without blowing your mind? A courageous dog. A handsome dog. A dog dressed like Spider-Man. So far I've calculated my plan as being totally fucking awesome and perfect. Things could go completely awry, though, if the plutocrats of international biscuit conglomerates get into the pockets of our presidential pooch, and force him to pass legislation in their favor. But let me show you how stupid this objection is and how stupid you are for suggesting it: What would a dog wearing a Spider-Man outfit need pockets for? If our future president lives by the creed wise Uncle Ben taught him, "with great power comes great responsibility," we will be in good paws.

Dear Mantooth,

What's going on in Pittsburgh?

—Little Something Something or Other, Umm, Yep

Pittsburgh is pretty cool. All the bands you know and love are doing well, except for CRUCIAL UNIT. By the time you read this column, they will be broken up for good. Some of you may not give a shit, being that they are not from some godforsaken hole such as Cleveland or Philadelphia. But some will have driven from as far as Florida to see their last show with MUNICIPAL WASTE, CAUSTIC CHRIST, and REFUSENIKS. I haven't been to the show yet, but I can assure you the following happened: everyone got real sad, cried, and hugged CRUCIAL UNIT goodbye. The members and the audience then committed mass suicide via cyanide laced iced tea and met their true god in the afterlife—a dog dressed like Spider-Man.

But there are still plenty of bands from the 'Burgh worth driving from Florida to see. CONELRAD, who recently had their *Bezoar* 7" reviewed in this here rag, continue to be one of the most brutal bands in the country you don't know about. I'm not so great at comparisons, but think if MINUTEMEN or even NOMEANSNO played insane grindcore. Any fans of the Slap-a-Ham Records back catalog or MELVINS discography would enjoy their new CD on New Addition Media called *A Final Dissolution*.

INTENSE YOUTH broke up a while ago, but two members continue to play together in what is called FUCKEDUPMESS, and they pretty much sound like their name. twenty minutes of distortion and tape loops. They should have a demo out sometime this fall, so be on the lookout.

SUBURBAN DEATH MACHINE play some pissed off 80s punk, sometimes in the vein of CAPITOL PUNISHMENT and sometimes in the vein of NEGATIVE APPROACH. They'll be releasing a 7" due out hopefully soon.

WARZONE WOMYN, relatively new with only a few shows under their belts, will be recording a demo sometime this month. They've got about twenty songs in about twelve-minutes. Think CROSSED OUT with MITB tendencies. Two members also play in CORPSE GRENADE and one is a former member of that tea drinking band that is breaking up.

And then there are numerous bands still in their infancy. One such band, tentatively called BRAIN HANDLE, have been described to me as sounding like a more melodic SSD, or a mix between ANGRY SAMOANS and THE FARTZ. Well, I've never heard them so let's just say they sound like (insert band from the East Coast) with a touch of (insert band from the West Coast) with moments reminiscent of (insert band from Europe.)

Dear Mantooth,

This still isn't very funny.

—Little Matty Summers, Philadelphia, PA

I'M NOT A MACHINE.

Thirty

Like all good writers (and many bad ones, I'm sure), Lance is an exceptionally curious person. He is interested in people. He's a gossip, but not out of maliciousness or power-hunger, just out of an insatiable curiosity about everybody. It's what makes his writing fun to read. So I was excited when I saw my name in his tour diary in the last *Some Hope and Some Despair*. Sadly, I was mentioned in the context of a relationship that's now over. Sadder still, he refers to the boy I was dating as "One of the nicest people you can ever hope to meet."

People are at the heart of every story. It's shocking how often we can talk about something as specifically human as music and disregard the stories of the people making it. We even do it with people we know. I enjoy his peace punk profiles for that reason—they bring the people out of the records.

Now that I moved out of MRR and am doing something else, with new people in a new environment, I have to try to remember the people who anchor me. Even if I don't talk to them much, there are people who have changed the course of my life, or held it steady in certain ways.

I'm not one of those people who don't believe in regrets. I'm not sure I believe people who say they don't have any, as if saying that were enough to make it true. Most of my regrets have faces, and they are very detailed and deserved. Many have to do with neglecting relationships that I was very lucky to have had, and squandering love and friendship.

I'm not sure why it took me so long to learn that it required real work and care to hold onto people, even when you loved them. At first I thought it was a sort of optimism of mine; I thought I believed that if you loved a person, they ought to just know it, without having to be told all the time. If I didn't call, I was just busy, right? But when I looked at it honestly, facing the losses I brought myself, I realized that in fact it was a horrible lack of faith in people.

I've always made friends pretty easily, and with remarkable people. But at some level, I carried with me a belief that people were a function of the moment, that you loved whom you were with and moved through them as you moved through life. It was a way

of evading responsibility, of being less of an actor in the world. The result was that not only did I lose relationships with great people out of carelessness, I also hurt people. I know I did, and who, and how, and even how much.

The other strange result of that pessimism is a feeling of being fundamentally alone. Many have commented on this truth, but I think I was less capable of suspending disbelief than others. That isolation, to me, is palpable, even though I am very fortunate to have good friends and loving family.

I understand a lot better now, how to be connected to others with bonds of experience, trust, and responsibility, and love. But I regret the way I learned this, especially the wounds I caused others.

My friend Gina had a housewarming party last night, a very special one for the martial arts school where she lives and teaches. Special because this is the building that she and others pitched in for and bought and have been constructing for years, from top to bottom, start to finish, in a state of constant overwork and exhaustion.

When I got home drunk in my vintage dress, instead of going over scraps of my writing, looking for something to turn into a story, I pulled out a box of photographs, the proof that my life intersects meaningfully with others. This morning I taped a photo of Sara and me in Kat's kitchen, laughing, with our heads coming out at a strange angle as if we were one two-headed creature. A pair of pictures of Mike, taken one after another, in his kitchen at the Bakery in Providence. In the first he's holding an old camera up to his face, in the second he's laughing, with a grin and his shining eyes. Another photo is Nicole playing guitar, that one goes on the bookshelf, under the strip of Aaron's hands, filing books at work. The last one is Mimi and me on my 27th birthday.

When I think of my good friends I don't think of their faces, exactly, more like just a sense of their whole interactive self that includes voice and laugh and glance and pose and gesture. But when I hang their pictures on the wall, I am moved by how pretty they are, too.

This morning people wander in and out of the kitchen, all mentioning how nice it is that the weather is a little overcast today. Janelle and I, with hangovers from two separate parties, especially appreciate the soothing clouds, one small relief in what Kesey called the "living death of the alcohol hangover."

Actually, I don't feel that bad today. I don't get really drunk very often, and I have a theory that it addresses a need to throw off tension. I am a tragically wound-up person, and sometimes I have to stage external events to slow myself down. I think this was in play when I tripped and fell last month walking down Geary St. with Kat and chipped my two front teeth and cut up my face. Slow down, slow down.

I can drink a lot for a 120-pound person, and sometimes I do, and when I do, I suffer terribly. But today was only a mild case, where rest was uneasy, dreams muffled and dislocated, smells off, tastes distorted, sweet and bitter. When I am feeling like this, not only do I have to slow down and recover, I notice things I was too wound up to see and feel. When I am put into a position of need, I know what I want very clearly.

In this case it was soup, which I made meticulously with three small potatoes, two carrots, half an onion, celery, and daal, seasoned with fennel and pepper. As the soup cooked, Elizabeth and I shared coffee. We agree that we should share a pot of coffee, but disagree about everything else. She likes it too strong, I think; the totally opaque coffee she makes can't be drunk in a large enough quantity to please me, since I like the drinking as well as the feeling.

We argue amicably about this for a while, finally agreeing that we will make it strong and I will water mine down, since you can't go the other way. We confide that we both have deeply serious feelings about coffee in the morning, including certain cups that are best to use, etc. The word she uses is "reverential."

After she takes her cup and leaves, I clear away the piles of trash on the kitchen table with a sweep of the arm and read, deeply content. I pause and look at the cat, who is cleaning his abundant fur, resplendent in pleasing shades of grey, orange, black, and brown.

Burger Time, the cat, is a special case. People often refer to him as "a beast." What they mean is that he seems a little more-than-cat. He is a good three feet long and very fluffy. My mother, meeting Burger Time, told me that he is a Maine Coon cat—they apparently used to hold positions as shiphands in New England. Apparently he's worth money. But what makes him more-than-cat is the presence he has when he walks into the room. The combination of his bulk and the creakiness of our old house announce his presence as it might a small child—not like an adult, but definitely like a person of some kind.

I feel like I can safely anthropomorphize the animals, since they aren't mine—I don't have to worry about forming exaggerated, unhealthy emotional bonds with them. And I only have to do the occasional walk or feeding, but I get to enjoy all the quirks of their fine personalities. It's really an excellent deal. For my own need to nurture, which I think is probably at least average in intensity, I have the plants.

I'm compulsive about the plants, a little overly focused, which I have taken notes about for my next relationship. I'm not a person with a lot of time on my hands, but I check on the plants at leased twice a day, to make sure they all have new growth and I remove any dead leaves, which suck up nutrients, and I just sort of admire them. One is a little aloe, a baby that grew in the pot of the huge aloe in MRR's kitchen. There were three babies, I took one and so did Clara, when we moved out.

Here we are, approaching thirty. John's the oldest in our house, but he just turned thirty last month. He advised me to get so drunk on my birthday that I couldn't move and had to be carried from the middle of the road, talking about aliens and drooling on my shirt, regressing as much as possible to teenagehood, or even infancy if necessary. Others have suggested a nice party. I was thinking, I don't know, it would be nice to just make a really simple but delicious dinner with my best friends there. Then it stabs me again, like a knitting needle: Aaron's in New York, Chloe too. Karoline and Robert are in Milwaukee, Mike is in Providence, Mimi is teaching in Ann Arbor and Mark is in the Mojave Desert, training to be a war correspondent.

I live in one of those houses now where things tend to accumulate. We had to call a special house meeting about the toothbrush situation, for example. There were easily sixteen toothbrushes in the cup in the bathroom, and only six of us. The water in the bottom of the cup was rotting and putrid. At the meeting, we discovered that none of the toothbrushes actually belonged to any of us. All of us had removed our toothbrushes to safe, secret locations so as to avoid contamination.

Bicycles, also. In front of the house is bike rack that is not actually rooted to the ground in any way. It is held up by the bikes themselves, in such a way that if any bike is moved or tilted to the wrong angle, the entire situation will collapse. Who owns the five or six extra bikes, or where their keys might be, is anyone's guess.

Living things, as well, have a way of congregating here. Currently, we have visiting populations of ants, fleas, moths, and mice. The fleas live on the animals, and seem to be getting discouraged by our efforts; luckily in many ways, there are no carpets in the house. The moths live like sultans in the granola and rice.

The ants are always fascinating. John called them Maoists as he sponged their corpses off the ice cream the other night. Minus the bureaucracy. Still, they stand as a model of efficiency and determination. It's only the selflessness that's frightening.

Then there are the finches that live in the fig tree outside my window. It's like a block party every day, as they gorge themselves on the ripe figs, becoming very plump, and then neatly wipe their glossy beaks on the branches. As they eat, they talk about this and that, little aviatory Lance Hahns. When I am stuck writing a story, I like to take a break and watch them for a while. One day I heard an ominous hush, and when I looked out there was a hawk, perched on the edge of the neighbor's shed, a mere ten feet from my window, one of the hapless finches clutched in his grip. Looking around nervously—at the neighbor's basketball hoop, the trashcans—he readjusted his grip and took off.

If the ants are communists, the mice are opportunists—like all mammals I guess. I discovered two young ones under my bed the other night, in a wooden crate where I keep toilet stuff, but not before they had eaten two

entire packets of soothing oatmeal bath treatment. I set out the humane trap, called the Iron Cat, since our cat s too much cat to do this sort of dirty work. The ugly metal trap is equipped with a gob of peanut butter, a handful oats, and a jar cap full of water (two mice starved to death when I foolishly put the trap under the sink for storage last month, and I took it hard.)

Guilt is one thing I don't feel a lot of. I feel some—see regrets, above. There are other things that I feel responsibility about, and confusion, but not guilt, like the misdeeds of my ancestors and my complicity in the war. These things I am trying to address, although never as energetically as I could.

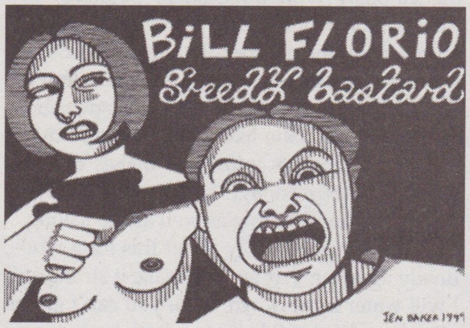
One thing I'm feeling now, with thirty coming up in a matter of weeks, is humility. I know I'm doing it right now, but I'm tired of hearing myself talk about myself. I would like to become a genuine person among people, who is invested in many levels of life and community, including neighborhood and city government and civic life. I at least want to answer certain questions I've posed myself about whether I've avoided these things as principle or out of laziness.

I am not at a very happy time in my life; some of the emotional passages are hard and harder alone. But in these times of change and adjustment are difficult, but truly, they are useful. They are conducive to a state of emotional alertness necessary for growth and creative work.

While I'm cherishing all these details of life, I'm trying to do expressly the opposite of retreating. I'm trying to participate. I'm reading more than ever, different newspapers, fiction, nonfiction, zines. *MRR* is making me proud; Golnar is an astute, responsive editor. Twice recently, I have been moved nearly to tears by the emotional relevancy of things in the magazine's pages.

One was at the tail end of Anandi's response to that guy in the last issue, where she mentions violence how women are not less violent; we are socialized to turn it on ourselves. I was just trying to explain this to my friend who admitted being a little jealous of how women get to display their anger, when for boys, he thought, it was always frowned upon. I explained why this was important, to make a display of throwing your anger out of your own body. I shuddered, thinking of the ways I've hurt myself, in relationships, in physical ways, in neglecting to give myself what I needed, out of anger, thoughts of being undeserving, and the many other ways, forms of self-loathing we fight. I'm not angry that men don't know this; I only want them to know it, because it's important, as important to the state of the world as the damage men's aggressiveness and outward anger does to people and things.

The other thing was the crimethinc column published in these pages, about mental breakdowns and mental health, which I've been thinking a lot about too. The part that really made me shaky was the part about how people can help their friend break down. Just the idea that it's normal for people to help each other this way had a strong impact on me, I felt like crying, the way you do when you've been holding back tears like a champ until someone expresses sympathy, then you break down. I don't really know what world they have, that you can expect your friends to take care of you like that, or I should say, that I could ever ask it, but it was, I thought, a good thought.



Are you with me or are you AGAINST ME!?

So a couple of months ago I started in with the whole *Package Tours Ignore Local Bands* column. If that one didn't get your attention hopefully this one will. It's been a couple months now and I still haven't gotten an explanation for my question. **What is wrong with having a local opening band when two or three properly promoted bands do a package tour?** Oh, I got answers like, "well such-and-such band refuses to sell their shirts at Hot Topic," and, "We take our friends bands on tour with us and pay them evenly." Who the fuck cares!? That wasn't the point.

Ok folks, I'm not talking marketing theory and how the major label conscious works. I'm talking about common sense. If you're in a band for six or seven years and you do the shitty get-in-the-van-and-tour thing, you have to play with bands from every local town you play in. You have to make friends. You have to come back and want to play with certain bands again. This is what punk rock is, this is all that it is. It's not fashion and its not musical taste. It's this network of people that we have, and if you get signed to a larger label and get actual support because you have worked for it, why does this mean you suddenly have to have arrogance about who you play with? If three bands are on tour together, why do they make the club sign a contract forbidding a fourth local band? If in fact they or their label paid a lot of money to get on the tour do they just feel they are giving that commodity away to the opening band? Or is it more sinister than even that? I suspect that the booking machine doesn't want to see local scenes. They want to sell the music that they are making money on and nothing else. Everything else is competition to them. Now, there are a million things people like to complain about, there are a million reasons people like using the term sell-out for. To tell you the truth, I really don't care about who is a sell-out and who isn't. I just think the line shouldn't be blurry. I think you can be a real punk rock band with real integrity and be on a pretty large label, I think your shirts can be sold at Hot Topic; I really don't give a shit if it costs $20 to get in and $25 for a t-shirt. If I really want to see a band that only comes around once a year I'll gladly pay it. I pay freaking $20 for a DVD of a movie a really like. If a band can fill up a big club charging that much, good for them. But to show arrogance to all of the rest of us is the real body blow. We are the reason why they are still a band after seven or eight years, not the marketing people that lured all the $20 paying kids. Sure, in the past the local band always got screwed, no money, poor sound etc., but when they play again two weeks later they still had twenty new people show up. This is how we all got into punk, and this is how more kids will get into it. Without it the whole thing falls apart.

Pretty much everyone I have spoken to who can't answer my question has agreed with me. Of course you should have a local band play. A local band brings more people to the show. It's just common sense. It's the right thing for the club. There are actually cool clubs, even ones that charge $15-$20 for certain shows. These clubs hurt if there are no local bands they can make some money on. They have to rely on what these package tours demand, and sometimes that's not enough to pay the bills. Also, even if you have ads in the newspapers, nothing beats kids on the street handing out fliers; guess which band on the bill is gonna do that. So, speaking of that, I think some learnin' needs to be taken to jerks in bands that think this is all okay and no one is gonna say shit about it.

So here are some more ideas to fuck with these assholes.

Whatever you decide to do, make flyers. Make flyers for shows going on, make flyers explaining what the situation is. Here is a sample, feel free to copy and use it.

Hey Kid, do you realize you just slapped down $__ bucks on a show and there is not one local band playing? It's possible the opening bands paid to get on this tour and it's even more possible they totally suck. Here is a list of forty awesome bands that play all the time in your town that you should check out and that these assholes think they're too good to play with. And here is a listing of shows they are playing in the next two months. Fuck these jerks, they already have your money; don't buy a t-shirt from them.

Now of course, flyers will get to some kids, but the ones who usually spend $50 to see a show and bring home a t-shirt usually don't read so well. This is why in that last column I needed to write a hysterically scathing speculation about AGAINST ME! People aren't very bright and sometimes sinking to their level gets results. Look who the fucking

president is. But number one is don't forget to make flyers. Without them you're just an asshole that fucked with the band. Like me. But hey, this is my flyer now.

I think the best way to make a scene is to something silly and possibly embarrassing. I don't think it's a good idea to be destructive or violent. Most people who'd do such things probably aren't reading this anyway, but I thought I'd put out the disclaimer.

Here are some ideas

Once, I brought a megaphone to a BIKINI KILL show. I made sure that whatever that annoying stripper girl said on stage was not gonna fall on anyone's ear. She said something, I replied via megaphone. People laughed. She shut up. Of course since you already have an agenda with the flyers, you can just ask every band why THE ERGS aren't playing this show, or why MODERN MACHINES aren't playing or any local band that should be playing. Some clubs will have a problem with you getting a megaphone in, so I would befriend one of the bartenders or something just in case and get it in that way.

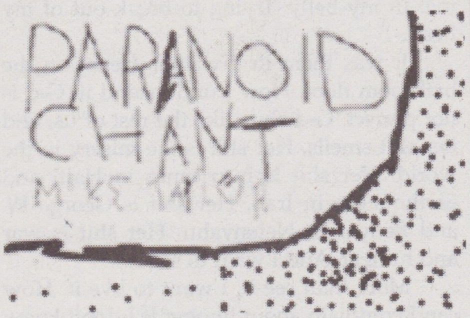
If a megaphone isn't handy, there are other ways to make sure a band will have a hard time playing. A powerful strobe flashlight shot right in their eyes will usually not make for a fun set. Of course you can throw things at the band, but stupid drunk people sometimes get angry when you do this. Some kids threw flyers at Lars from RANCID once when we made an uninvited appearance on stage at Coney Island High in NYC. It ended up with him getting pummeled and running for a cab outside. I once wadded up pages of my zine and throwing them at the singer from TEEN IDOLS. It was pretty silly but some drunken jock guy didn't think so and punched me in the face. It's very likely if it's a big show people will be even dumber and more violent that yer usual gutterpunk fest, so try to be subtle. And bring a large friend.

You can actually hold some sort of demonstration outside. Yeah, you could picket, but that's not very original. How about get a generator on a truck and have a band play in a lot on the street. If you do get ticketed, you can probably all chip in, you can hand out free CD-r to kids that come and watch.

Set up interviews with the bands and ask them why they are being such arrogant bitches. Really, this is the best thing you could do. Set up the interview in advance and make it for a zine or newspaper that's pretty well known in your area. Hey, you may actually write for it. And ask these shitheads why they agreed to go on a tour where the contract specifies no local bands allowed. Don't do any of this stuff drunk or high, you're not gonna get anything across and it'll probably turn violent. No one needs that.

This is all about communication and the spread of ideas. Unfortunately you have to scream a little sometimes to get your voice heard. It's rare that I actually have an issue to support; I really don't take things very seriously other than my friends and my girlfriend and feeling good about myself in what I do. I'm sure a lot of people got mad at the stink bomb column, but anyone who reads my column from month to month knows that it was intended to be funny. I have had to take a lot flack as well as had some nice supportive emails, and it's truly worth it if people wake up and take on these morons who think they can be a punk band yet shit on all of us like that. It's insulting.

Thanks to all the clubs and people setting up shows for letting me in on which tours have no local bands in the contract. I plan to print which tours are fucked up from now on as I find out. Keep 'em coming. bill@candids.com



The southern heat bears down like divorce if you don't know how to take it. One would think the contractors would take this kind of factor into account when pouring new tar; but who, after all, would be walking around in this heat? Well, Nate and me, from the Subway to the Eckerd. Chapel Hill's not our turf, so lacking the in to all the vegan, trans-friendly mechanics in town, we opted for the Jiffy Lube near the strip mall. While waiting, we dropped off some film and went for iced tea. As native southerners, we weren't jarred by the pastors one booth over discussing the political fiber of the new Michael Moore film. We waited patiently for the hour to pass to then go pick up Nate's film and then the car.

The stoned young man staffing the photo desk at eleven was gone at 12:10; in his place was an older Indian woman, about 5'6", long dark hair streaked with silver. She told us that unless there had been a miracle, our film wouldn't be ready. "But perhaps there's been a miracle," she said, leading us to the envelope where Nate's silly photographs of Soophie Nun Squad indeed were. Somehow the three of us became engaged in conversation, and she asked us what we were doing passing through Chapel Hill.

"We're artists on tour...reading our...*comics*..." sputtered out between the two of us, never knowing how to phrase these things. Like, no, we're not Tom Clancy signing books at Borders. We just *do* this kind of stuff.

"So you're artists. What do you paint?"

Of course, being an *artist* often comes down to *painting*, and once again, what do you say? So not meaning to be a jerk, just wanting to make the exchange as straight forward as possible (but still being a jerk), I simply reply, "Oh, like deer and forests and stuff," thinking that she would be satisfied with my relative familiarity and let it be. Instead, she said, "So, you are a realistic painter. I once taught art. In Nassau."

Fuck. She's going to want to talk about landscape painting. My jig will be up and she'll know I'm just some dick. "I quit because all the children acted like Americans. Loud and impolite."

"Why are you in Chapel Hill now?" Nate asked, possibly fearing the fabricated history I may make up for myself to avoid talking about our zines to a stranger.

"My daughter is going to school here, so I came with my husband. I've been on the teachers' waiting list for five years."

"Five *years?!?*"

"That's not all. My husband was a pathologist in India. An award winning doctor with several years experience. In America he cannot get his license. The test here is very arbitrary."

"Well why do you stay in Chapel Hill?"

"The land is very beautiful."

"Of course. What else do you do here?"

"I teach Yoga. But actually, tomorrow is my last day."

"Why?"

"I insulted the head of my school. All the other teachers in the triangle want to give their yoga a name, so I told them I would teach "Kickbox Yoga." They were offended, so I told them that there was only one yoga, and they were perverting the practice by trying to teach a signature variety to make money. "

"Like power yoga, right? Like the stuff white collar managers make their employees do at law firms and stuff?"

"Right. Power Yoga. So stupid. I tell you, these people are neither kind nor polite."

"And so now you're just working here?"

"Yes. I get benefits, which I need to keep until my husband finds work."

"Do people treat you OK?" I realized it was a dumb question, but how often do you get into an unexpected conversation with a smart, acutely sensitive stranger from such a different background? I just wanted to hear more.

"I don't mind it. It's not humiliating. Jobs like this...you just don't get to use your *brain*."

What could we say? We thanked her for talking, took our pictures, picked up our car and drove back to the apartment where we had slept. We ate some tofu, went to a bookstore, read in front of a room half full of strangers, had a beer, drove back towards Brooklyn, parted ways, tried to sleep, etc...

End Top 5
Josh MacPhee/Nate Powell as car mates
The Ex live in Los Angeles, 9/04 and new *Turn* CD
Wrangler Brutes *Zulu* LP
Since I'm writing for the future, the hope that George Bush did *not* get reelected.
My squat in New Zealand if GWB *did* get reelected.
Fat Day's *Unf Unf* LP
King Cat comics
Write me: PO Box 28226, Providence, RI 02908

I know of no country in which there is so little independence of mind and real freedom of discussion as in America.
—Alexis de Tocqueville 1831

I'm burning up. On fire. I want to tear my clothes off and jump into the freezer. I can't. I don't have the energy to move. I lay on the bed in fetal position. My head pounds like someone pushed a crown of thorns over it, then squeezed. Suddenly, there's nausea. A wallop to the stomach. A great heaving.

I roll off the bed and crawl arm over arm to the bathroom. I open the toilet lid. From the murky water a putrid heat blasts my face. I heave. My stomach tightens. A huge bubble moves into my mouth. A couple teaspoons worth of viscous liquid. Barely anything at all. I spit it into the toilet. Unable to make it back to the bed, I lie on the bathroom floor.

I drift into a waking dream. I know I'm on the bathroom floor; at the same time, I'm in a room with G-d. As usual, she wears a black leather bikini and carries a whip.

"Shit!" I yell at her. "I want to watch you shit."

Her brow wrinkles in a question.

"Shit!" I demand again, then fade back to consciousness.

I crawl back to the bed and check the clock. It's 6:32 PM, sixteen minutes to go.

Yom Kippur: 5764. This has been the roughest fast in years. Sometimes I get a headache, usually from caffeine withdrawal. Sometimes I get very thirsty, usually from eating a too-salty meal before the fast. But this year, it's like the flu, or worse. I can't move. I've got the sweats. Nausea. A headache from here to Des Moines. A sip of water. A bite of bread. That's all it would take.

But why, Mykel? You're not religious. Your G-d is a fuck of a lot different from the Jew G-d. Why put yourself through such agony? What does it do?

I used to have an easy answer. I'd say, "Why do fish swim? Why do monkeys jerk off? Because that's what fish and monkeys do. I'm a Jew. I fast on Yom Kippur because that's what Jews do."

I don't have that answer anymore. Too many Jews are doing bad things. I don't want to be associated with them. Still, I *am* one. It's up to me to find another reason for swimming than just being a fish.

I find it right there, lying on the bed with me. In my belly. Trying to break out of my head.

It was there in my mini-dream on the bathroom floor. Now I understand it. G-d is not perfect. G-d shits like the rest of us, and her shit smells. Her shit is the misery in the world. Her shit is hurricanes in Haiti and earthquakes in Iran. Her shit is George W. and Benyamin Netenyahu. Her shit is war and hunger. And I want to see it.

More than see it, I want to live it. How can I complain about hunger if I don't know what hunger is? How can I rage against US companies buying local water supplies and selling them back to people, unless I know what it's like to be without water?

My fast lets me see G-d shit. It shows me what my life as an American denies me. Now, I can complain about hunger because I *know* hunger. Now, I can talk about thirst because I *know* thirst. It gives me the answer to "You don't know what you're talking about." Of course, I know. I've lived it *because* I am a Jew.

I've given new meaning to the water I swim in. It's the same water I've always swum in, but now I see it in a new way. Thanks G-d.

Flashback: I'm as angry as a Democrat at a news poll. It's 1956. I sit on the couch with Mom and Dad. Elvis Presley is on TV, making his debut on The Ed Sullivan Show. I'm too young to really get what's going on, but I know it's something great. The audience is going wild. My parents, who never let me eat while watching TV, have set up the dinner table in front of the TV.

When Elvis is on, he sings "You ain't nothing but a hound dog..."

I've spent many nights listening to my father's 45s but this doesn't sound like that. This is new. Something special. I can't tell why, but I can feel it.

"Aw, he's just like everyone else," says my mother. "He gets into his pants one leg at a time."

Suddenly, I'm in a sweat. I feel myself shaking. As soon as Elvis is off I run upstairs to my room. Off with my pants.

"No!" I think, "Everybody *else* gets into their pants one leg at a time."

I flop on my back on the bed, raising both my legs in the air. Holding my pants in my tiny hands, I push both my legs into them at the same time. My right foot sticks on the seam. I take them off and try again. Both legs. Together. You don't *have* to put your pants on one leg at a time. I will *not* put my pants on one leg at a time. I am not everybody.

End Of Flashback

Everyone who reads this column thinks of herself as different. Every one of us divides the world into us and them. Then we see ourselves as unique among us.

But us, just like them, gets into pants one leg at a time. The challenge, I'm gradually finding out, is not to put both legs in at the same time, but to find a *reason* for putting one leg in before the other.

You can accept your reality just because it's there, or you can interact with it forcefully, personally, and for your own reasons.

In the early days of *MRR*, before I came out as a liberal, people accused me of being *reactionary*. By reactionary they meant that I was an extreme conservative. In that case, my critics were wrong.

But take the word apart. Check out the root: *reaction*. Reactionaries are people who form their opinions *in reaction to* the opinions of others. In that sense, I am a reactionary, and have been since 1956.

48 years later. I'm at ABC No Rio. Saturday afternoon, I'm showing up to see who's playing. It's a Columbian band. I wish I could remember their name. The club is filled with young Hispanics. They know the words and sing along.

After the set, I go out back to look at the sale records. I spot an attractive Puerto Rican-looking (pleonasm?) young man. He wears torn black jeans, a white t-shirt with the band's name on it, and a new pair of Converse All Stars. I walk up to him.

"Nice Nikes," I say.

"Hey!" he says, "these aren't Nikes. They're Converse."

"Nike owns Converse," I tell him.

He stops for a minute. "I don't give a shit," he says. "I like Converse. Nike isn't going to stop me from wearing them."

He's right. I'm being a reactionary. I switched to Vans when Nike bought Converse. I reacted. This guy's not letting Nike push him around.

Me? Instead of making a choice, I get pushed around willy-nilly in reaction. You do too! You're voting for Kerry, aren't you? (More about that in a few paragraphs).

Sure *alternative* is the most disgusting word in the English language. But the answer to reactionaries is just that, alternative.

One of the reasons I admire Fat Mike and Fat Wreck Chords so much is that instead of complaining about corporate

monopolies and evil majors, he made an alternative.

Cdbaby.com and interpunk.com are alternatives, two ways to buy CDs without Amazon.

Entire ethnic groups, entire races are moving away from the reactionary we're-gonna-change-our-name-because-you-call-us-something-else to making something completely new.

Take Kwanzaa. *I Love Kwanzaa.* It's a made-up holiday. A ritual with no history. Like a fish building a swimming pool, Negroes created an alternative to Christmas, Hanukkah, or whatever the Arabs have. They made their own day, a new rite with new meaning. Not just a reaction.

In 1989 I wrote about The Ainu. Since most of you weren't born yet, I'll reprint what I said about them.

The Ainu once occupied most of Japan. Until a few thousand years ago, they wondered freely among the mountains and rivers. Masters of fishing and hunting, their crafts grew into a culture. They could make a boat for twenty out of one tree. They could carve intricate totems with a twitch of the knife hand. Then, the Mongol hordes invaded from the south. They killed a bunch of Ainu along the way. Those they didn't kill, they drove north.

The Ainu held out for a while, but the invaders were more numerous and better armed. The Ainu lost. The Shoguns forbade these once-free Ainu to study their own language and forced them to learn Japanese.

"Assimilate!" said the government. "Don't show yourselves. Be like everybody else."

That's what they did.

Ainu culture began to die. People forgot how to speak the language. They lost their old crafts as they became afraid to show their skills and reveal their Ainu-hood. Most Ainu married the locals and disappeared into mainstream Japan.

Eventually, the only full-out Ainu lived in a few tiny towns in the hostile climate of Hokkaido. They survived by using their ancient carving skills to make trinkets for the tourists. In some villages, you could pay 1000 yen to see some old men dance a "real Ainu dance." It was very sad.

In the 70s, some young Ainu said, "Enough!"

They asked the few oldsters who still knew the language to teach it to them. They opened an Ainu language school. Now there are three.

The tribe began to create a living culture. Based on the skills and life styles of the past, they made new rituals and festivals.

Instead of reacting against the Japanese, the Ainu have made their own culture, resurrected their language, and developed new rituals. Instead of accepting the water they swam in, they filtered it, colored it, and made a different reality. Now what about you?

Instead of creating your own reality, you have become reactionaries. Take the latest election. Please!

I have met a few pro-Bush people. They like the guy. His values are the same as theirs. I've met many more *anti*-Bush people. They hate the guy and believe he will (*will????*) turn America into a vast corporate jail. But I have yet to meet anyone who is pro-Kerry.

I walk down Bleecker Street. A young guy, college-looking, stands with a clipboard in his hand. On the back of the clipboard is a KERRY-EDWARDS sticker.

"Ah, here's one," I think.

"Hi," I say. "Are you really pro-Kerry?"

"Do you want Bush in for another four years?" he says. "That'll be the end of abortion and all other freedoms in America."

"Whoa," I say. "I didn't ask about Bush. I only asked if you were pro-Kerry."

"I'm pro-anybody but Bush," he says.

Even Kerry's campaign workers aren't pro-Kerry. Jezus!

Digression: Despite the myth, I do not actually live off my *MRR* writings, or selling promo CDs on eBay. Most of my income comes from teaching Japanese people how to speak English. I work for a Japanese-owned school. The pay is lousy. There are no benefits. But I have a lot of freedom. I work when I want. Don't when I don't. I can take a month—or a year—off, and then come back to my job.

Besides teaching the English language, I teach a course on American culture. That course is similar to Social Studies (if they still teach it in American schools).

Explaining politics is one of my many pleasures in that class. My current class—four housewives whose husbands work for big-name Japanese companies—is learning about the two-party system.

"America has a two party system," I explain to them. "There are two candidates who can be elected. One is a Republican. The other is The Lesser Of Two Evils."

Back To The Regularly Scheduled Program:

Right now, I'm not interested. No matter who wins, *we'll* live. A few more of us will end up in jail, and a few more of *them* will die. I'm more interested in finding a new way to look at the world.

So far I've got three. One is "I'm a fish. This is water. So I swim." The second is, "I'm a fish but I hate the water, so whichever way the current flows, I'll swim the other way." The third is, "It doesn't matter which way I swim, as long as I do it with purpose and with passion. The current is not important. What is important is giving the water some meaning." That's the one I proposed last month.

Now I'm thinking there's a fourth way. The alternative solution. That one says, "Fuck this water shit. Gimme a beer."

Endnotes: (*Visitors to my website: mykelboard.com or subscribers (email to: god@mykelboard.com) will receive a few extra endnotes. There are just too many to keep up with.*)

•*Jew of the Month Club:* Last month I talked about Lenny Bruce, my favorite Jew of all time. This month, I want to talk about Rabbi Michael Lerner founder of Tikkun.

Tikkun is a liberal Jew organization dedicated to taking Jewishness back from the neo-cons and Israeli fascists. I don't agree with them on everything. (They favor a two-state solution to the Israeli problem. I favor one non-theocratic state.) They are on the right track, though, and are cool enough to be vilified by most every mainstream Jewish organization.

Check out their website at www.tikkun.org.

•*More on AOL dept:* From the beginning, I've been writing about the evils of AOL. Their censorship. Their monitoring of users. Their quick bans in chat rooms. Now comes word from the great Darwin Awards. You know, those folks who honor people who have helped clean up the gene pool by dying in commission of some extremely stupid act. Well, AOL has banned them too.

Here is the spittle from the horse's mouth (www.darwinawards.com):

The Darwin Awards newsletter is banned from AOL email boxes, even if you are a long-term subscriber. AOL Users—protect your right to subscribe. Tell AOL you want the Darwin Awards newsletter back!

Fortunately, I rarely see an AOL address these days, and expect the company to go belly-up before too long. If you're still on this sinking ship, jump!

•*Speaking of Darwin Awards dept:* Here's my favorite from the newest crop, slightly shortened.

(3 March 2002, Sheffield, England) As Kim Fontana, 32, and Paul Cowley, 40, left the pub, they noticed that a streetlight was burned out, creating an attractive pool of darkness on the road. Unable to rein in their passion, they began to canoodle on the asphalt outside the pub.

Witnesses said the couple was lying right on the white line, kissing and cuddling. The passionate pair were warned of the danger of their chosen position not once, not twice, but three times — by a car driver, a bus driver, and a pedestrian.

Despite these disruptions, Kim and Paul continued, oblivious to the approach of a small, single-decker bus. The bus driver mistook the undulating shape for a bag of rubbish in the poorly lit street, and was unable to stop in time. There was a dull thud...

Kim and Paul were struck and killed at midnight. Paramedics found Kim lying on her back with her sweater pulled up, and Paul between her legs with his trousers pulled down.

The bus driver was fined for careless driving and his license was revoked for six months. Fortunately, his employers consider him an excel-

lent employee, and plan to give him other duties for six months. Relatives of the victims said they were glad the driver had kept his job.

•*One with relevance dept:* Here's another one. This one with some relevance to the Jewish theme of this column:

(5 September 1999, Jerusalem) Israel insisted on a premature switch from Daylight Savings Time to Standard Time to accommodate a week of pre-sunrise prayers. Palestinians refused to live on "Zionist Time." Two weeks of scheduling havoc ensued. Nobody knew the "correct" time.

At precisely 5:30pm on Sunday, two coordinated car bombs exploded in different cities, killing three terrorists who were transporting the bombs. The bombs had been prepared in a Palestine-controlled area, and set to detonate on Daylight Saving Time. But the confused drivers had already switched to Standard Time. As a result, the cars were still en-route when the explosives detonated, delivering the terrorists to their untimely demises.

•*An American Week dept:* The last week in September is *Banned Book Week.* If you missed it and want to organize a book burning of your own, here are the top ten banned books. 1.*To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee 2. *King & King & Family* (Children's book) by Linda de Haan & Stern Nijland 3. *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley (banned because he was right?) 4. *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou 5. *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain 6. *Places I Never Meant to Be* edited by Judy Blume (ironic, since this is an anthology of censored short stories). 7. *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury (even more ironic, since this book is about book-burning) 8. *Fools Crow* by James Welch 9. *Kaffir Boy* by Mark Mathabane 10. *Stones from the River* by Ursula Hegi.

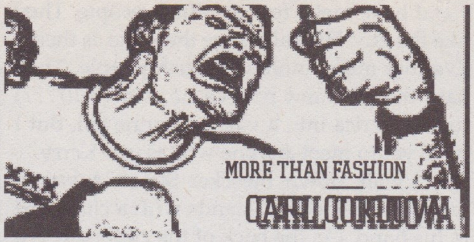
So buy one of each, get out that blow torch, and have a ball!

•*Coming out dept:* Actually *came out*! Yowsah. Go right to www.worldwarix.com or maybe interpunk.com or cdbaby.com and get your copy. I mean the WWIX (That's WORLD WAR NINE to you, buckaroo!) CD! Hoo hah! Is there another band in the world that covers "New York City Tonight?"

Oh yeah, I went their record release party. CDs were $5. Don't have $5? Then take one! And their moshpit...100% girls! Including a cat-fight. Watching this band is like being ninth on line at a gang bang. You get as much pleasure from seeing others have a good time as you do from the act itself.

•*One more question dept:* Five or six years ago, the fashion dog in New York was the Dalmatian. Maybe it came from Disney. Maybe romanticizing the fire department after 9/11. But the fad lasted only a year or two. Then it moved to Pugs. The ASPCA was swamped with abandoned Dalmatians. They were gassed by the dozen.

My question: What's going to happen to all the Oriental girlfriends when the fad ends? Are we going to have scores of nubile Orientals wandering the streets, wondering what happened to them? Will the US immigration service become the pound of the 21st century? Stay tuned for the answer!



Crucial Yule

Well, it's going to be another winter-less December in San Francisco. This month's column is going to be an "end of the year wrap-up" of sorts. It is going to focus on bands that either didn't get much mention this year in the column, or otherwise fell through the cracks at *MRR* altogether. I still can't stress enough to all the bands out there: send your records in for review! Despite its latest established reputation, *MRR* doesn't take itself as seriously as you may think. Your hardcore band doesn't have to adhere to the pinko communist agenda to get coverage. We have no problem covering *a lot* of generic apolitical punk rock, so there is no reason why we won't cover your apolitical hardcore band, zine, label, etc. If you don't have a song about George Bush, that's okay! There are still a lot of kids out there that have the right idea, even despite their seemingly apolitical views. If you believe that hardcore should stay out of big business and on the streets where it belongs, then someone here at *MRR* will probably dig your band. If hardcore still means cassette demos, VFW halls, and paper fanzines to you, then someone here at the magazine is on the same page with you. *MRR* does have a sense of humor. "X-mas Time for the Skins" makes its rounds on the turntable every once in awhile. The other day, I caught Mike rocking out to the *Thought Crusade* LP by NO FOR AN ANSWER. He knew all the words to "I Spy". Not only is that record generically straight edge, but also it isn't even a good album! So get your shit together hardcore. I am tired of sticking up for your ass here at the office.

Records You Missed Out On

DEAD STOP - "Done With You" LP

Okay, so I know this band got reviewed recently here. But like KNIFE FIGHT, VIOLENT MINDS, SNOBS, and whole other mess of hardcore bands, it seemed that a lot of the straight edge kids were hip to these bands before anybody else started to pay attention. The DEAD STOP 7" seemed to go largely unnoticed here. Thankfully someone at Deranged Records was paying attention, because they just released their LP in North America. This record will be turning a lot of heads (and rightfully so). I can seriously say that no one is going to top this Belgian band's ability to blend some of my favorite hardcore bands of all time, and put out one intensely fierce, well produced, catchy as fuck hardcore record. The closest band I can compare them too is AGNOSTIC FRONT, but ANTIDOTE and NEGATIVE APPROACH also come to mind. Every song on here blazes. My only problem with it is that some of the guitar leads seem out of place. But they will probably grow on me. Easily one of the best LPs to come out in 2004. Don't sleep on this record. Contact Deranged Records at PO Box 543 Station. P, Toronto, ON, M5S-2T1, CANADA.

IRON BOOTS - "Weight of the World" EP

This was one of the best demos to come out in 2004, so it's no surprise that someone pressed it onto vinyl. Some people have a love/hate relationship with this record/demo (I being one of them). The reason why I love it is the same reason I have a big problem with it. These songs sound like they could have been out takes from WARZONE's *Don't Forget the Struggle, Don't Forget the Streets*. Matter of fact, if I made an 8th generation copy of this and then tried to pass it off as un-released material to unsuspecting WARZONE fans, I would say about 90% of them would believe it was the real deal. To say this band was influenced by WARZONE would be a *huge* under-statement. The singer unabashedly copies Raybeez's accent, his vocal inflections, even his slang. And the guitar leads don't get any more similar. It's like listening to a tribute band cover that one album by your favorite band that you never got around to listening to. So despite all my complaining, I can't stop listening to it. It's fast, angry, and really, really well done. And after seeing them tear it up live, I came to the conclusion that a WARZONE clone will always beat out any metalcore clone any day of the week. Hopefully by their next release they will have drawn their influences from more than one band's record (despite however great that one record is). Order it from Damaged Records 1190 Sycamore Summit, Sugarhill, GA 30518.

UNIFORM APPROACH - "A Pledge to the Edge" EP

As you might have already guessed with a name like UNIFORM APPROACH, this band was a joke straight edge band from England whose only release was a demo in 1989. The singer (who was coincidentally straight edge) also sang for one of the best English hardcore bands of the late 80s, HERESY. HERESY went on to cover YOUTH OF TODAY, so who knows how much of a joke this band really was. Regardless, the singer does a worthy impression of Tommy Carroll, and the guitarist (who was also in RIPCORD) comes up with some pretty catchy riffs. With that kind of line-up, it's no surprise that UNIFORM APPROACH pumped out some pretty solid youth crew jams (even if they were tongue-in-cheek) like "L.S.D. (Learn, Sucker or Die!)," and "Cross

Country." Florida had STRAIGHT YOUTH, California had GRUDGE, New Jersey had CRUCIAL YOUTH, and now this release secures England's place in the very small sub-genre known as "Parody Straight Edge Bands that are Actually Worth Listening to". Maybe GOOD CLEAN FUN will make it there someday...Get your copy by writing to Clint Chapman c/o La Vida Es Un Mus, BM Active WC1N, 3XX London, UK.

Speaking of England...

Attention European punks and hardcore kids. I am planning my first trip out to Europe via England at the beginning of next year. I am looking for advice and information on record stores, vegetarian restaurants, worthy tourist attractions, etc. I plan on staying out there for at least 3 weeks, so if you might have a place to for me stay, that would be great as well. I don't drink or do drugs, but I can party with the best of 'em! I am pretty much going to try and cover everything in Western Europe including Sweden and the Netherlands, so hit me up!

What's On the Turntable

1. BATTERY "Until the End" LP
2. EPMD "Strictly Business" LP
3. BOLD "Running Like Thieves" 7"
4. BASTARD "Wind of Pain" 12"
5. THE ABORTED "Wolf Dog" EP (thanks to Martin for the heads up)
6. DEAD STOP "Done With You" LP
7. POWERHOUSE (FL.) Demo (where's the vinyl re-issue *of this*?)
8. JUSTICE "Look Alive" EP (another great sleeper)
9. DEL THA FUNKEE HOMOSAPIEN "I Wish My Brother George was Here" LP
10. UNIFORM APPROACH "A Pledge to the Edge" EP

Please send rare, colored vinyl, and the first SOULS OF MISCHIEF LP to: Carl Cordova, 746 Baker Street, San Francisco, CA 94115. Or you can email me ih8thekids@gmail.com. Thanx.

Well, since I effectively took last month off from the ever-pressing responsibility of keeping my finger on the bleeding pulse of the here-and-now grind scene to take in the sights sounds and smells of the Three Days of Darkness Festival, I've got loads of records that have been piling up just begging to be brought to the attention of the masses. Walmart, here they come.

I'll start things off by going back a couple months to the typically ill-attended Metal Night that Gilman hosts every so often. The first band of the night actually ended up being my favorite and one of the most casually impressive bands I've witnessed of late. Playing to almost no one, the local-by-way-of-Ohio drum and guitar duo that comprises POPULATION REDUCTION blazed through a wicked set of surprisingly tight and technical death/grind. In case I haven't made it clear in my previous two installments—I am hopelessly obsessed by bands' drummers, but hopefully anyone would've noticed that POPULATION REDUCTION have another in the seemingly endless list of candidates for Best Drummer Ever. Despite the blow to my own drumming ego, it was quite refreshing to have an unknown band come out of nowhere, kick you into the dirt and march all over your sorry ass. The band then sent me their *Terror Tactics* demo and in spite of several complaints from the band in regard to the sound, age and ex-member status of the recording, the nine tracks here (including REGURGITATE and UNHOLY GRAVE covers) are still plenty impressive and well worth the attention of fans of death and grind. If you live in the Bay Area, keep an eye out for future live show, and new recordings are on the way. Get in touch at: www.populationreduction.net.

BRUTAL DETH were up next, and these four high school kids showed a lot of potential, blasting through a short, fast, furious set of *From Enslavement*-era old school grind. Word is there's an EP in the works from RSR Records from Germany, so keep an ear out. A SLEEPING IRONY were up next, rising from the transplanted ashes of A DEATH BETWEEN SEASONS. Their latest (and second) demo is a five-song suicide-note-in-waiting of heavy depressive URANUS-style screamo-violence (or something) mixed with volatile doses of discomforting samples and noise interludes. Get them to play your wedding reception at: A_sleeping_irony@hotmail.com.

A pair of Arizona metal bands were up next, starting with RAPID FIRE, a ridiculous power-metal outfit with choreographed stage moves and a sword fight (not the kind you had with your brother in first grade) mid-set. Our German house guest played their demo no less than seven day a time for the following two weeks, so maybe that tells you something. MERCITRON followed with a set of pure unadulterated death metal which I was very eager to witness given the previous work of their guitarist Ryan in the phenomenal STRUCTURE OF LIES and UNRUH. MERCITRON is more or less the logical extension of S.O.L. as they were a more technical metal-influenced version of UNRUH, and now with MERCITRON, all hardcore influence, for better or worse, has been shed for a straight death metal approach. While I don't think anything will top the amazing riff-work of STRUCTURE OF LIES, MERCITRON is a worthy follow-up, both live and on their *White Belt Demo*, containing four songs of SUFFOCATION-styled technical death. Get in touch at coronachaz@yahoo.com. Finally, EXHUMED's alter ego DEKAPITATOR finished off the show in fine form with a spirited set's worth of KREATOR & SODOM styled 80s thrash. You really can't go wrong when half your songs are about tanks.

In last month's column, I mentioned that my favorite record at the time was a parrot-fronted metal band, and this metal juggernaut of which I speak is the one and only HATEBEAK and their 7" *Beak of Putrefaction* (Reptilian, 403 S Broadway, Baltimore MD 21231, hatebeak@yahoo.com). Okay, yes, it's a novelty record and perhaps only marginally above mere joke status, but nonetheless, *you must hear this!* The band is two guys playing full-on de-tuned death metal with a drum machine and the bird "singing" overtop. "Waldo" the parrot has the most uh, inhuman voice ever—I really can't believe that, as the liner notes say, no effects were used on his vocals. The screeching high end and the monstrous low-ends are positively otherworldly. Two songs here—the title track and "God of Empty Nest" (hopefully all self-respecting metal fan will recognize both puns) and the cover is just a lifted JUDAS PRIEST cover—guess which one. The record is a split with the joke outfit LONGMONT POTION CASTLE, previously of prank-phone-call notoriety, and their side is just generic goofy metal that you'll probably forget is even there, but trust me you will go to your grave with this remaining one of your most treasured records ever.

Well, it's all obviously downhill from here, but fortunately not too far. Continuing on in metallic realms, I have to mention the latest from long-running Swedish virtuosos MESHUGGAH—the single 21-minute-long song that comprises their *I* EP. I don't know who's behind the Fractured Transmitter label (PO Box 33518, Cleveland, OH 44133), but whoever it is has either admirable luck or business savvy to snag these long-running technical metal alchemists as their first release. *I* is in my opinion, MESHUGGAH's finest work to date, with the parts working all the better at being extended to minutes-long passages at a time. This band is one hundred percent about rhythm—the fact that most of the riffs center around open-E thrash picking belies the complexities of the arrangements, which manifest themselves in the time signatures, precision and speed. There are a couple specific moments on this record- certain shifts between passages at blazing speed and with the weirdest beat-that will just blow your mind.

Next up we have another older "new" release- the last BATHTUB SHITTER full-length, *Lifetime Shitlist*, which I believe was released back in January. I've sung their fecal

praises on other 7" releases in the *MRR* reviews page, and this one gets the same props. These Japanese grinders have a knack for writing songs with a variety of riffs and tempos and being tongue-in-cheek and goofy while still remaining utterly punishing in the heavier moments. They pull off the rare feat of having mid-pace "rock" parts that aren't just hokey as well as having high-pitched yelping and gurgling toilet-flushing vocals that are actually catchy. And as for the lyrics—well, BATHTUB SHITTER is solving the world's problems, one dump at a time. On racism, from the song "What Color is Yours": "Don't matter your skin is white/ black or yellow/ keep the brown in your bowels/ Why are they in trouble?/ What is difference?/ It's nearly color of the earth/ Shit!" Or how about finding your purpose in life, from "Meaningful Parade": "Walking our several ways slowly/ digestion under reason/ this intestine is so long/ Lost yourself to work for business everyday/...This bowels is a winding path,/ Is it life?" Is it indeed?

From local bizarro cult label Tumult here in SF comes the mighty noise of cult German metallers PROFESSOR, with a 3" CD re-issue of their *Academizer 7"* originally released on Epiphany Records almost fifteen years ago. Now I am generally not much of a black metal fan, but this shit is so over the top in terms of speed, riffing and sheer ferocity, it should merit the attention of any extreme music fan. The sound on this is just perfect-agonizingly raw, with all the noise and hiss from the original lo-fi recording intact. You can tell the drummer was just pounding the living shit out of his kit and the guitarist was busy snapping his neck head-banging in the studio or basement or jail cell or wherever this was recorded. The song titles here, in fitting with the band and album name, are send-ups of "evil" nomenclature, e.g. "Immatriculation" and "Into the Auditorium". Summon the ancient ones at: Tumult, PO Box 642371, SF, CA 94164, www.tumult.net.

The best record on the slower end of the spectrum I've heard of late is undoubtedly the new record from OLD MAN GLOOM—*Christmas*. I've been avoiding listening to these guys for years for some reason, but since I repeatedly had to rush to the front and demand to know what was being played every time someone put it on in the record store where I work, I figured it was time to give them my full attention. The songs take their sweet time to materialize but the anticipation and pay-off is so worth it—when they finally break into their main riffs, the guitars cascade like a marauding avalanche in waves of heaviness down on your hopelessly crippled remains. OLD MAN GLOOM also manages to make their ambient/noise songs just as interesting, memorable and genuinely creepy as their guitar/drums/vocals songs-not many albums I'd say that about. This is an easy favorite of the year for me, so any fans of NEUROSIS, ISIS and the like will not want to miss this. (Tortuga, PO Box 291430, LA, CA 90029).

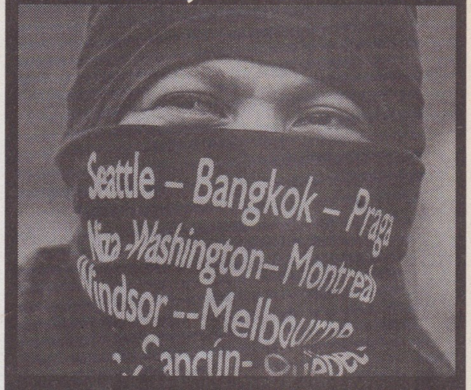
Finally, the past few months have seen a couple of exceptional discography CDs come to light which are godsends for the completists but might be a bit deflating for those who spent years searching out the individual seven inches. *The Discographer* from HEWHOCORRUPTS is my personal favorite, as their take on brutal grind is one of the strongest and strangest. The blasting of the former KUNG FU RICK guitarist turned insane drummer is unmatched, but the bizarre thing about these guys is their decision to incorporate one-step-away-from-KORN detuned slap bass in a grind setting. I know- sounds retarded, but it works. HEWHOCORRUPTS also get points for their METALLICA insults—the *Master of Profits* EP contains songs like "Sell 'Em All," "Wall Street: Revisited," and "Ride the Limo" and the cover of the CD depicts their singer challenging Lars Ulrich to a tennis match.

Brazil's I SHOT CYRUS get the "collected early works" treatment with the *Complete Discography '97-'01* CD on Refuse Records outta Poland (refusexresist@go2.pl). Their brand of dark heavy thrashing power violence is positively lethal on this great collection—on the first couple tracks, I swear the singer is a dead ringer for the guy from NUCLEAR ASSAULT. Definitely one to check out. HEAD HITS CONCRETE puts your endurance to the test with *Thy Kingdom Come Undone* (self-released, headhitsconcrete@hotmail.com)—an hour's worth of everything they've done. I've been hesitant to profess allegiance to this band before, but this record finally won me over—hearing it all at once really nails home just how intense and pummeling these Canadians' style of noisy chaotic grind really is. Not for the weak of heart. Lastly, two quick mentions—MONSTER X and MY MINDS MINE both have had their complete works issued, with *Indoctrination* (Hater of God, haterofgod.com) and *48 Reasons to Leave this Planet* (SelfMadeGod, www.selfmadegod.com) respectively. MONSTER X's straight-edge grind should need no introduction in these pages, but lesser-known MY MINDS MINE. are solid Dutch old-school grind also deserving of attention.

That's about it for this month. Be sure to check out my review of the soon-to-be Bible of Grind—*Choosing Death—The Improbable History of Death Metal & Grindcore* by Albert Mudrian in the book reviews section of this same issue. I simply can not say enough good about this essential history of the genre—it is a must-own for anyone reading this column. Get in touch, send demos, etc at: 701 Broderick St., San Francisco, CA 94117, c/o Elliott Lange or email: cromlaughs@hotmail.com.

"Dash into a toilet and refresh/escapism to shit with detonation"
–Bathtub Shitter

Go Team, Smash State!



"Lefty" Hooligan • What's Left?

Know your rights
These are your rights
All three of 'em
It has been suggested
In some quarters that this is not enough!
Well..................

The Clash

I never liked The Clash. I know, punk rock heresy. Their music never did much for me, I thought their lefty stance a bit smug and naively romantic, and I couldn't understand all the fuss about what was just a rock-'n'roll band. I preferred Still Little Fingers myself, but nobody pages to my column to read about "Lefty" Hooligan's musical tastes and opinions. I'm exploiting a quote from that little Clash ditty to introduce one of those subjects that tends to separate the men from the girlie men as Reich Governor Schwarzenegger would phrase it.

The whole notion of rights.

The rights of man, civil rights, human rights; the idea here is that somehow we possess or are infused with a substance or a quality called rights. Rights are not like the color or texture or smell of a person's hair however; they are intangible. Various societies have existed quite splendidly for centuries without acknowledging the right to free speech or peaceable assembly or even private property for instance, and whole people have remained oppressed for equally as long without rising up to demand their rights. When such a people do revolt, it's often to demand food, not free speech. Rights cannot be located in a human being. We can't say for instance that our rights reside in the frontal lobe or the pineal gland. Nor do rights seem to be innate, like language. When human infants are raised together without a language they invent their own, but when the same infants are raised without the notion of private property they don't necessarily spontaneously demand it as their right. Is it any wonder then that the very existence of rights has been called into question?

Given the incorporeal, unlocatable, undetectable nature of rights, those who believe in them often have to reason that rights are conferred upon the individual by some higher entity, power or process. Before the Enlightenment, and aside from god which we'll get to in a moment, rights gained legitimacy from tradition (as when the English barons asserted their traditional feudal rights and privileges against King John and the Crown through the Magna Charta) or from custom (the basis for English common law, also recognized in the Magna Charta). That tradition and custom also enshrined injustices and slaveries should give us pause about considering either a suitable basis for establishing rights. The American Declaration of Independence, preeminent Enlightenment document that it is, presents perhaps the oldest argument around, that rights are god-given and inalienable. Disregarding my knee-jerk atheism for the moment, basing one intangible—rights—upon another intangible—god—isn't exactly sound logic in my book. Nor does it help to get all Hegelian either and talk about the Spirit moving through history and crap like that. The opposite tack, of contending that the US Constitution, and specifically its Bill of Rights, ensures the citizens of this country certain basic rights and freedoms is equally untenable. The idea that the Constitution or for that matter the Magna Charta or any similar physical document can guarantee us certain rights should be self-evidently ludicrous in this day of the Patriot Act and John Ashcroft.

Much current political theory about rights is still based in Enlightenment notions that rights stem from some implied social contract, or originate in nature and natural law. The doubtful validity of any contract no matter how metaphorical, involuntarily entered into upon birth, has long been pointed out, yet what amuses me is that anybody could believe that rights, let alone law might find some basis in what Locke, Voltaire, Rousseau *et al* called the state of nature. Something as amoral, ruthless, remorseless, even fascistic as nature would hardly seem the right context to produce one of human civilization's self-proclaimed crowning achievements—individual rights. Indeed, it is precisely the threat of a state where might is right and the law of the jungle so to speak prevails that motivates individuals to enter into a social contract according to much Enlightenment thinking.

As even so rudimentary a survey of the subject as this reveals however, finding a basis for right other than might that is both sufficient and sufficiently universalist is hard to come by. Little wonder then that one reaction to Enlightenment rationalism—*a la* Nietzsche—reaffirmed that might alone makes right. The inability of classical liberalism to effectively counter this brutal assertion in turn demonstrated the emptiness at the heart of modernity at the same time it opened the door to fascism's atrocities. Counter-intuitively, the way to go beyond the formulation that might is right is to embrace it, though not in the way its reactionary origins would indicate.

Anybody who does security to prevent fights at punk shows quickly realizes that two, at the most three people working together can bring down any one raging knucklehead quite easily. Let me rephrase this for emphasis. By cooperating, three wimpy crusty punks can take down one buff neo-Nazi skinhead hand to hand. So instead of proposing that might is right in a social Darwinist survival-of-the-fittest *übermensch* sense, I want to consider right based on collective might.

Mainstream historians debate whether the American Revolution was truly revolutionary in trying to establish an entirely new social order based on individual liberty, or merely conservative in wanting to restore early colonial rights and privileges previously enjoyed but gradually encroached upon by the mother country. Whatever the case, the American Revolution was an armed collective revolt to assert and defend certain rights eventually spelled out in the US Constitution and Bill of Rights. The collective might of former colonists-turned-revolutionaries secured the rights we consider our due today.

Yet even something supposedly as fundamental as the right to free speech has had a long history of collective struggle in this country in order to be exercised. The Industrial Workers of the World engaged in various free speech fights from 1909 to 1914 in which IWW members converged *en masse* on targeted cities to speak their politics from soapboxes on public street corners with the expressed purpose of getting arrested and packing the local jails to the breaking point. These actions rarely resulted in the capitalist class relenting and giving the workers the free speech rights for which they fought. Much more successful was the organized labor uprising that occurred during the Great Depression in the 1930s in the form of mass strikes, sit-down and wildcat strikes, general strikes and even open armed rebellions. These working class struggles forced FDR's administration in 1935 to pass the Wagner Act, also known as the National Labor Relations Act, which guaranteed workers the right of collective bargaining. The collective might of the working class had secured a new right for the American people, one not found in the Bill of Rights, but this victory was temporary. As world war ended and cold war began, the Taft-Hartley Labor Act of 1947 rescinded the right of workers to collectively bargain and labor no longer had the collective might to fight and overturn such reactionary legislation.

This all too brief historical assessment does not deny that individual struggles can have a profound impact in securing and expanding rights, but instead highlights the role of collective organization and action—collective might in other words—in making individual rights possible. Our willingness and ability to defend our rights individually and collectively is the reason we have any rights at all. The explicit manifestation of power through demonstrations, strikes and rebellions isn't the only way collective might is expressed; there is also the implicit power built into social relations and organization. At brief moments in humanity's recent history, various territories were run and defended by the working class through workers assemblies, councils, militias and armies, fleeting glimpses of real social power that gave workers the right to make their own history.

Which brings us to a socialist basis for rights. Rights arise from the social nature of the human individual, and from the cultures, societies and civilizations that this sociability produces. Much as a healthy sense of individuality comes from proper socialization, individual rights are a social product. The social basis for individual rights does not have to be arrived at through notions of collective might and social power as discussed above. It stands quite well on its own.

I could go on about how this isn't an endorsement of pc cultural relativism so often used to justify the lack of individual rights in other societies. I have no problem in considering a society superior or inferior based in part on the rights given its members, but that whole discussion requires its own column. This column has to be short, penance for last column's excesses. Next column next year.

PERSONAL PROPAGANDA... To find out my real name purchase my book, *End Time*, from AK Press (POB 40682, SF, CA 94140-0682) for $10. The book is called *Fim* in Portuguese and can be ordered from Conrad Editora (R. Maracaí, 185, Aclimação, 01534-030, São Paulo-SP, Brasil) for R$ 24,90. I can be contacted at hooligan3@mindspring.com.

Rape

I am a woman. I stand in this life with this female body, and have traversed life on a woman's path, often not of my choosing. I may have rejected patriarchy long ago, but it has never rejected me. It is always waiting, and hangs close by. Like a long shadow, it follows so many days and skies of life. This is why the first, most basic solidarity that I feel with my whole heart and soul is with the women of the world.

Many punks know by now that three women were raped in Philly during the

Pointless Fest. Many punks also know that a group of women came together immediately afterwards and confronted the rapist bastard on the street with the strength of the truth, their rage, and their fists. The statement of the Philly Pissed group strikes at my core, and I support their every word. And it is not only the women of Philadelphia who have come together. Minneapolis women also quickly formed a group committed to following up with the rapist involved, who lives in their town. This is a message that you cannot ignore. Women in the punk scene will not allow our sisters to be raped, attacked, and assaulted without consequences. We will defend ourselves, and we will defend our sisters. You—rapist, punk, women-abuser—have been warned. When I found out that a woman was raped during the show my band played at the Pointless Fest, I felt sick and shaken to my very core. I am a woman, and I have been raped. I thought of the survivor, who now has to live with this attack for the rest of her life. I would rather never play a show again, would rather smash my guitar to pieces, would rather never sing another song than be a part of a punk scene where women are regarded as nothing more than prey. Thank you to the women in Philadelphia, to the women in Minneapolis, and to women everywhere who are breaking through the silence of rape and hanging it out to dry. Rape is a part of the violence of this capitalist world, a sick culture built on exploitation, patriarchy and disregard. And it will take all of us to clear this shroud and light the way to a better world. We must do this together!

We must share our hope and strength!

(Remember, rapist: you have been warned).

In Sisterhood and Solidarity, Erika

Anonymous Boy: By the time *MRR* readers see this interview, the election will have passed. That's the point of this column, for readers to look back and see which of our election predictions come true. What do you think might happen if Kerry wins? What direction do you think the country will go in? Some people are saying it's not gonna change much, because Kerry is talking about sending more troops in, whereas what many people are looking for is withdrawal.

Steve S: You mean particularly with regards with Iraq, and I have…what? Like two minutes, and a nine second rebuttal?

Ron: I let you know when the green light goes on.

Steve: Well with in regard to Iraq I certainly *don't* think that he has any plans to immediately pull the troops out. I believe him when he asserts that though he thinks it was a mistake, it would be a *greater* mistake not to do whatever we can to stabilize that region of the world. I suspect his definition of "done" probably differs from Bush's, and if there was a regime in place there that wasn't terribly democratic, but was generally stable and more or less favorable to the United States, that would probably be enough for him to pull the troops out. Certainly if he's successful in getting foreign troops to come in and supplement the U.S. forces, he'll use that as leverage to pull American troops out. I don't know how reasonable an expectation it is that he *will* be successful. That anyone would suddenly clamor to send their troops to Iraq seems unlikely.

AB: You don't think he'll be able to pull it off?

Steve: No. That's not what I said. It's not that I don't think he'll be able to pull it off. I don't think he'll be able to withdraw troops at a rapid rate because they are being replaced by Allied troops. He's asserted that's something he'd like to be able to do, and it's something we should be *trying* to do, though we really aren't trying now. But I don't know if that's something we'll really be able to do in any substantive way. Maybe on the margins—a few troops here or there—but not enough to make a big difference in the size of the US deployment. Will he be successful? Will he be able to pull it off? I don't know. I have no freaking idea. I think anyone who says they know the answer to that question is just full of shit.

AB: I heard Jeanine Garofolo on Air America radio say what the Iraqis want is the USA out. *"You got rid of Saddam Hussein, thank you very much, now get out!"*

Steve: That's certainly true of some, but is that the majority opinion? I don't know. I think there are a lot of people who don't like the idea of the United States occupying their country.

AB: Would they like the idea of a Kerry presidency, with *even more*, different countries occupying the country…now it's not just the United States, but everybody?

Steve: Well, I actually think that's preferable than just the United States. The more that you can prove to people that we don't really have designs on controlling their lives, or their oil, the more willing they'll be to accommodate a temporary step of foreign involvement in order to stabilize the country and move it to a different political system. If you don't have the credibility, then I think Iraqis will just want you out even if the alternative is actually worse. I think the average Iraqi is actually worse off in the long run if all the troops pull out than if the troops remain and Iraq's political system evolves to something stable and relatively democratic. The average person is clearly worse off if that doesn't happen. Some people will be better off because they will seize power. But does the average Iraqi want everybody to just leave right now? They may emotionally want it, but not intellectually, because it isn't in their own best interest.

AB: So I suppose the next thing would be if we project a Bush re-election…

Ron: He can't be re-elected when he wasn't elected in the first place.

AB: Can we project a Bush election? Can he be elected?

Ron: He *can* be, but he can't be re-elected.

AB: If he remains in power, he will not be able to pull together a coalition of other countries, in your view?

Steve: I don't think that's his goal. He doesn't really talk about a goal of pulling together a coalition of other countries. Occasionally, he may reference the existing coalition, such as it is, but I don't think he sees the solution here residing in getting other countries to share more of the burden. Do I think the number of troops may increase after the election? Absolutely! Under either one. Under Bush I think it's even more likely. I think that if he didn't think that it would imperil his ability to win the election he would have already increased the number of troops in Iraq!

AB: Really? That's what you believe?

Steve: I do. I think he's serious about wanting to actually install a democratic regime there. That objective is a laudable one. The way he went about it is *completely* wrong— including even initiating it. But the objective is a laudable one. The idea that you can just force democracy on people, by invading their country and installing an interim administration of your choosing, and then have democracy suddenly flower in ninety minutes, is preposterous. It's not going to work that way.

AB: Isn't his idea of democracy different from your idea of democracy? Isn't his definition of democracy to permit unregulated corporations to control everything and freely run rampant?

Ron: You forgot stealing elections, and preventing certain people from voting who'd probably vote against you.

AB: You're talking about Florida now. There was a report on the news today about many shady things happing in Florida yet again. By the time people read this, perhaps it will already be known that Florida was stolen, just like in 2000.

Steve: I'm actually going to make a startling prediction.

AB: Go for it. That's what this column is about.

Steve: I think that Kerry is going to win the election in the Electoral College *and it is not going to be close.*

AB: What do you base this theory on? Because there's nothing current I'm reading that suggests this. Everyone predicts a severely close election.

Steve: There have been reports of a dramatic surge in the number of new voter registrations, particularly in some of the swing states—Pennsylvania, Ohio, Florida, and Michigan. It is my sense that the majority of those people are going to vote for Kerry over Bush. I don't really have evidence to suggest why that's true. It's just a feeling I have. That's why it's a completely preposterous prediction; it could equally be wrong as right. But I'm inclined to think those people who are registering to vote are more likely to be against Bush than they are against Kerry or for Bush. And because I think the race, apart from these new voters, *will* actually be very close, they will be enough to tip the balance in those states. New voter registrations are also going up in states where Bush is popular in the South. It doesn't matter. They will make no difference in the Electoral College. They will make no difference!

AB: Now imagine this prediction fails, and Bush whether through theft or through legitimate election remains in power. What will this mean for gay people?

Steve: It's a near certainty that the long term effects would be disastrous because at least one and more likely more than one seat on the Supreme Court will be vacated and I don't have confidence the Democrats in the senate will be able to block the appointment of a very conservative nominee.

AB: They may block one or two, but they can't block all of them solely on the grounds of political differences.

Steve: And Bush will just keep nominating them, one after the next.

AB: Some right-wingers are going to slip through eventually, as long as they have the legal qualifications, or even if they don't. Scalia and Thomas's legal qualifications are somewhat questionable according to some people. So what does this mean? Bring back the Sodomy law?

Steve: No, certainly not.

AB: Ban on gay marriage?

Steve: Um, because of the makeup of the senate I don't really see that happening, but it could happen! I don't count that out at all, but they're so far behind.

AB: Overturn Roe v Wade?

Steve: Now, *that's* a possibility. That's a *real* possibility. I don't think they're likely to overturn Lawrence v Texas (which overturned Sodomy Laws.) I think if the Defense of Marriage Act comes up, it probably doesn't bode well for gay people. That will probably be upheld, but you never know. I think it's more "the death of a thousand cuts." It's not that there's going to be some big ruling like the Sodomy ruling. I think it's going to be many little things, like a civil union couple in Vermont, who separated. They dissolved their union and one of them took the child to Virginia, even though the custody arrangement was originally established in Vermont, and tried to re-arrange the custody. And in Virginia, they don't recognize the other partner, who according to them has no relationship to the child. Vermont sued Virginia to stop Virginia from placing a custody order different from what Vermont already started to do. These are the kinds of cases that get escalated to the Supreme Court. These are cases where our relationships are likely to be de-valued by the court if Bush has the ability to appoint one or more people, especially if he's replacing Stevens, which would be a disaster. Or even if he replaced O'Connor, who is sort of in the middle on some things, it would be a disaster. If he replaced Rehnquist, he goes against us every single time. But Bush does get to appoint the Chief Justice if he replaces Rehnquist and the Chief sets the agenda. That's who assigns cases, and it's a pretty powerful position.

AB: What do you envision would happen for gay people in a Kerry presidency?

Ron: I think we might start working towards civil unions. I think we actually might start getting some rights, little by little. The important point right now is I don't think anything further is going to be done *against* us. I think as time goes on, we're going to ultimately win all of our rights, we simply are, and the right wing knows that. That's why they're doing all the things they're doing now, because they're simply trying to delay it. But ultimately they know it's going to happen. They're going to do everything they can to put a roadblock in our way, but once we do win all of our rights they're going to act like they were our friends all along, just like they do with black people today. When the gay topic came up in the vice presidential debate I thought it was fun to see Darth Vader humbled about having a lesbian daughter. However, I wish Edwards had said *"It's such a shame we didn't get to see her at the Republican convention. Was she out of town? Was she baking a cake?"* I thought he was way too wimpy.

AB: Well, the commentators I heard felt it was wrong of Edwards to bring Cheney's daughter into the debate because when you start bringing the family into it that's low-class and bad.

Ron: I even heard (liberal) Paul Begala say that, and I said *"You fucking idiot, what the hell is the matter with you?"* These people simply don't understand. This is a first-class civil rights fight we are in and regardless of whose family it is, the point is it has to come up and be spoken of in all forums at all times, and not shoved in the closet. That's exactly what these people are trying to do. They're trying to make us second-class citizens or say we don't exist. Their daughter *didn't exist* at the Republican Convention! Isn't that interesting? It's very interesting to me that everyone strode out ALL of their family members; *"and here they are…and here's the wives, and here's the daughters, and here's the dogs, and here's this…"* and there's one person who simply wasn't there. Why? In short, it's another form of keeping people in the closet because the right-wing conservatives wouldn't approve of it. I mean how ridiculous is that? This is their daughter, you can't approve or disapprove of the fact that someone has a daughter who happens to be a lesbian, they *have* a daughter.

Steve: First of all the introduction of Mary Cheney personally into the debates is not in any way improper. It's no secret Mary Cheney is a lesbian. Dick Cheney revealed it himself several weeks ago. One can't argue Edwards was revealing any kind of fact someone wished not to be revealed. I think Edwards' purpose in doing it…I think I understand what he was trying to do but he didn't do it effectively. I think what he was he was trying to do in a subtle and understated way…oh well, maybe this isn't really what he was trying to do, but this is what I took from it. His response to the question after the usual *"Senator-Kerry-and-I-believe-marriage-is-between-a-man-and-a-woman"* nonsense was to say, *"marriage has been regulated the states for 200 years, and one state's requirement to recognize another state's marriage hasn't been the case when there's been disputes for over 200 years. So the only purpose of the amendment is to divide people for political purposes."* I think the undercurrent of what he was trying to say is; *"Look how it's dividing this family right here."* Edwards was saying: *"When I say it divides people that's not just a sound-bite, that's really what happens because people actually have gay people in their families!"* I think he didn't made that point very effectively if that was the point he sought to make, but that's sort of what I took from it, and that's a completely legitimate and valid point. There's no reason whatsoever under any circumstances to not mention the fact that someone is gay. It's no different than someone mentioning their wife.

Ron: …or their daughters, or son-in-law,

Steve: …and anyone who thinks that there is [a reason], is reflecting the continued stigmatization of gay people, and of being gay.

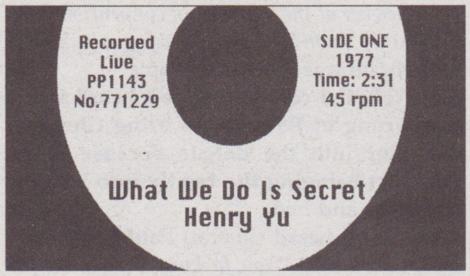
AVAIL played here recently and I had one of my epiphany nights. Sometimes I think a whole lot about things that are going

to happen, like shows I'm going to see and the bands and friends there, and I get excited with a life-or-death sort of intensity. Other times, though, I just know I'm going, and don't ponder it all that much. Then, when I'm in the midst of it all and things are great, I get swept away by a certain excited mania. It happened to me in Philly once for the first Pointless Fest, when I was focused on a handful of favorite bands but never entertained the idea that there would be good friends from all my old stomping grounds in the Northeast gathered there. I was so overwhelmed in the very best way that I couldn't even get a complete sentence out all day long. Last fall I was in Philly yet again for a great show. As FROM ASHES RISE were setting up, it hit me, I started jumping up and down with excitement, nearly busting out of my skin. And it happened again the other night when AVAIL was playing. I hadn't seen them in ages and was stoked to find out on less than a week notice that they were playing. I knew I'd be there, and didn't give too much more thought to it, other than perhaps remembering that last year when I saw them I hardly knew anyone at the show. It had been a very young crowd, and I took notice of the fact that most of the older crew of folks I was used to seeing at AVAIL shows were nowhere to be seen. I had no idea really what to expect this year, and didn't give too much thought to it.

I found myself at the bar next door, surrounded by old friends and faces that I rarely see these days, but that I expect to see when Avail plays. I fell into the comfortable place of not being crowded at a show with hundred of kids I don't know, but instead catching up a bit with some old friends. Everyone slipped around the corner just in time to see JERICHO, the local rising band who had been talked up quite a bit. Everything in between can go without much comment, really, 'cause I just got myself amped, and was suddenly hit with the giddy excitement that AVAIL was playing, here at home in RVA. I was so damn excited. China laughed. She wasn't feeling it, but she knew I was, and felt it for me. I remember when seeing AVAIL in Richmond was the sort of thing that made people travel. But then again I traveled thousands of miles myself to see AVAIL, and then eventually with AVAIL. And the excitement has never wavered.

I crawled up on stage, got the camera out, and everything exploded. I fucking love AVAIL. I love their songs, and I know them so well. Sometimes there is a comfort that comes in just knowing, when things falls into place and are totally right. Hands in the air, singing along, hair flying, and just not caring. And so I had my moment. I rocked and flailed. I sang a lot, and shot roll after roll of film. My hair flew and I banged my dreads out of the hair tie. I was ecstatic. And when it was all over, drunk as I may have been, I couldn't help but think that this is why I ended up in Richmond. AVAIL is the reason that I am in Richmond. It's not like I live here because of them, or stay because of them. Truth is I almost never even see any of them, and as a whole band we're lucky if they play once a year. But it is from being friends with them that I first came to visit Richmond and it was from those visits that the town charmed me. It is from going on tour with them that I fell in love with Erik, who I ended up moving here to live with. He hasn't played with AVAIL for years. But nonetheless, AVAIL is in my blood. They're a band that ultimately and hugely shaped the course of my life and got me on a path I might have never guessed back in NYC when I saw them for the first time in an empty basement at ABC No Rio. I only watched them then 'cause one of the girls who volunteered spoke highly of them, and the show was so small that I felt bad. Funny how life can be. It's funny 'cause I thought I was going to write about friends moving away, and of the trauma I was feeling, and how much I'll miss them. And of re-acquainting with long lost friends from the past, and realizing that many of those old friends have kids who have grown up to be the age of kids at punk shows these days. And some of these friends are having second children while I get older day-by-day and I still feel like a kid myself. I find that the motto of late when I talk to people is something along the lines of, "Where did the time go? It seems like yesterday and a lifetime ago, at the same time." And whether it's Jay and Andy away, or Jessica having a second child, or me still rockin' my heart out to AVAIL, or digging through my photos of ABC No Rio to hang up at the Nanci Raygun, it all does seem like a lifetime ago and yesterday at the same time.

—Chris(tine) c/o Slug & Lettuce • PO Box 26632 • Richmond VA 23261-6632



Just a self-flagellatory slap on the back on making it through four years oozin' this cheezwhiz. Unfortunately for you literati, I have no plans to quit as long as reissues from the *Killed By Death* era continue to worm out and my brain can spout euphemisms for half-baked thunk. In case the belligerati start to mutter, don't let us forget that Tim Yo, god rest'im, *hand picked* me (OK, it was actually only me and now-ex-but long-time-shitworker Jeff Yih) from a pile of bodies on the floor at a Motherfucker 666 pre-mosh-pit show in early 90s to write for thee hallowed mag. I impressed him with my long pole in the tent no doubt, but I never took him up on the invite 'til a whole decade later, in a post-Tim, god rest'im *MRR* environ circa 2000. So consider me bequeathed, grand-fathered, and tar and feathered till kingdom come. I've really had handfuls bordering on oodles of people tell me over the years that this column is the only reason why they read *MRR* (yeah, and the newsprint is the only reason why they wipe their ass with it too, right?). I think there was a point when enough self-importance slipped past the self-loathing to actually make it to my head and I thought, I *am* a writer, dammit. (Who am I kidding though, my participles dangle in hack rank amateurism, cut with enough straight-laced propriety to kick me outta beloved DIY territory... anyhoo, cheers, OK?

Apollo Geez...

A mere coupla years ago I posted a "Year End Poll" (that I no longer do) in which I awarded the "Most Insulting (Record) Trade Proposal," wherein both parties—good friends of mine—remained unnamed. Well, despite the jokey nature and the anonymity, that got blood boiling on the side of the implied insulter, and heck, it was the straw that broke the god dam of heaven sent vitriol.

Some diatribe, much proposed punching and ass kicking, and lotsa four-letter words later, I found myself with one less friend. Sheesh.

While our mutual pals shook their noggins and shrugged in disbelief, no one—including us—was able to straighten out the situation, and friendship was replaced by the white noise of polite incommunicado.

So *implied insulter* had told me why he got so mad, and that was the *implied insultee* has been an indian-giving shite on that trade, and furthermore also some prior trade shadiness had occurred. In other words, the situation had built up to that point. In my goal of not getting punched out, I spent more time dodging fists and pseudo-fists than really listening to what he had to say, so I shelved it in my head.

Meanwhile, the so-called *implied insultee* side of the trade proposal and I became even better friends than we had been, to the point at which we rarely even talked about records anymore. Instead we ventured into real friend territory, talking incessantly and obsessively about girls and relationships and stuff. I'd even go so far as to say that he was my best friend despite living in different cities. It was practically a gay crossover burgeoning love…smooch!

But it all came down to a pile of records.

So *implied insultee* kept mock complaining about the bursting-at-the-seams massiveness of his trade pile, which indeed was beefier than my actual collection. This lead to the proposal that I buy a bunch of it. The prices were to be 2/3 of Mike B list prices (Mike B

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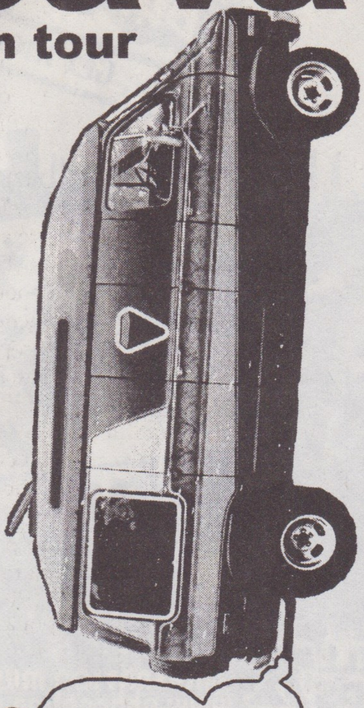

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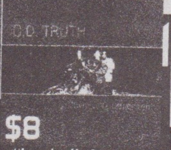

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being the longtime market maker of set sale punk worldwide for the past decade). We decided on which records they would be and the total price (which was several thousands of bucks by the way), and *implied insultee* "set them aside" for me. This entire process took several months because we spent most of our time talking about his dating problems.

Well, it didn't take long for the chink in the armor to expose itself. Literally a few days. "Oh by the way, some people came over the other day and flipped through the <my reserved> records and offered more money for some of them. You'll now need to 'outbid' them in order to still get them."

What the fuck?

Needless to say, I hung up and we pretty much never talked again. A couple weeks later, the "reserved pile" that I spent so long picking out started appearing piecemeal on eBay for the highest bidder. That was the ultimate bitch slap.

It wasn't until now, a year later, when the whole thing paged itself back into my head. *Implied insulter* had been right all along. The *implied insultee* was an indian-giving shite. His pathology is one that gave rise to the term "collector scum." It cost me my friendship with *implied insulter,* and scum-pleasing tendencies also cost my friendship with *implied insultee.*

Here it is. I offer public apology to *implied insulter* about trivializing his reaction to his anonymous mention in that Year End Poll. Despite his innate hot headedness and occasionally smelly pate, his reaction was not to be fucked with, cos I feel the same boiling over when I think about *implied insultee's* lame ass ways. Let's bury the hatchet in that lame ass, where it will invariably have to share space with lots of other ephemera.

Perhaps one day, we will be friends once more. Over and out…roger…copy that.

The Six Degrees of ZOLAR X

The obscuro alien pre/post glam band ZOLAR X were but a footnote in the annals of whatever. Imagine Spockalikes with mid length hair, the occasional antenna, peroxide by the bucket, encased in skintight anything.

But a helluva footnote they were! They should get bestowed *missing link honorarium* status for providing one or two degrees of K. Bacon separation from such opposing ends of the rock spectrum as BIG STAR, KISS, and ROCK BOTTOM AND THE SPYS. Despite being L.A. based, ZOLAR X somehow found themselves doing their first recording session (1976) by Jim Dickinson and Terry Manning at Ardent Studios, home of BIG STAR. While playing out live, ZOLAR guitarist Ygar Ygarrist became friends with a very curious Ace Frehley of KISS (no doubt sharing fashion and makeup secrets - Frehley was the Space Alien KISS member). A Post-ZOLAR Ygar later found himself in the drug addled punk combo ROCK BOTTOM AND THE SPYS (whose lone 45 stands revered in KBD nerd boy circles). QED.

Despite a few anti-bids for something bigger, several recording sessions yielded nothing more than one slightly posthumous (and semi-legit) 12". That was 1982. Now Alternative Tentacles has done the band some justice with it's release of "Timeless," which compiles these sessions wrapped in lotsa photos of the photogenic band and nice liner notes (tho' those denying their descent into farsightedness will cry "uncle").

While their northern California counterparts THE TWINKEYZ stayed in garage rock territory (TWINKEYZ were a better documented late 70s band with a similar predilection for alien inspired music, if not the whole getup/lifestyle), ZOLAR are theatrical sped up glam, guitars mixed a little low and Zory's all-too-bid-for-Broadway vocal stylings rather cloying. They have their moments ("Rocket Roll," "Space Age Love"), but there are other songs that succumb to the worst of the 70's AOR sound, not at all unlike Styx or Kansas. There's only one place for this much theater and that's the theater. This stuff would be best revived as an off-Broadway Hedwigian review, with full costume. Beam me up!

I Know How It Feels...Bad

Sometime in 1981, while straddling equal penchants for both JOURNEY and the SEX PISTOLS, my friend Andy played me a record that knocked me into left field for good. The instrumentation on it was so munged that I thought something was fucked with the playback equipment. But it wasn't. And while the washing machine cycle of twisted notes rumbled forward, a cackled voice would break in to shout *"I know how it feels"* followed by an unhealthy pause… then *"Bad!,"* and the music or whatever-it-was would lurch forth again. It had it all. Angst and adenoids. That was my first introduction to HALF JAPANESE, led by the warped minds of the Fair brothers, Jad and David.

While a CD greatest hits and a reissue of the awe-inspiring and sometimes laborious triple LP Half Gentlemen/Not Beasts made the rounds a decade ago or so, their best records lay digitally dormant 'til Drag City recently dragged them out and stuck them together. Arguably the band's best moment, *Loud* originally came out on LP in 1981 on the Armageddon label outta the UK. Skronking saxophones, retardo jazziness, and a joyous and pained cacophony of art damage overlaid with Jad's braying. David Fair was still very active at this point in the band and did most of the songwriting. Lyrics run the gamut of bad high school experiences ("All you teachers are so ignorant and I hope you rot in hell"), hopeful love ("where's a love that would save my life?"), and music worship ("Baby wants music"). They play and sing like little animals run amok in the zoo. "New Brides of Frankenstein" foreshadow a move toward horror themes, which they explore in full on *Horrible,* the 12" EP that followed. There, various monsters and associated fears haunt them ("Think with a Hook," "Rosemary's Baby") culminating in the amazing "I Walk Through Walls," a purging fest of pain, screaming, and primal therapy. The 45 that started it all for me ("I Know How It Feels...Bad") and their tracks from a flexi done for the *Take It!* magazine, Byron Coley's pre-*Forced Exposure* outing complete this super reissue.

Can I Please Crawl Down Your Chimney?

As we approach holiday time again, the Gulcher records comp *Xmas Snertz—Have a Very Gulcher Christmas* makes its way back to the top of the stack. Released last year, it's bound to be perennial listening for us ne'er-do-wells, with the deep and hard Gulcher roster contributing. Featured are ANGEL CORPUS CHRISTI, MX-80 SOUND and solo, WALKING RUINS, gizmo types like Kenne Highland, Ted Niemiec, Phil Hundley and Eddie Flowers' CRAWLSPACE. Mach Bell from THUNDERTRAIN trades in snowbells for cowbells. Guests to the label include PANSY DIVISION, and the AUTOMATICS. Stocking stuffers. Gulcher is at http://www.gulcher.gemm.com

Next month expect new releases from: JARBOE, SCREAMIN' MEE MEE'S, etc. Send stuff to Henry at 601 Fourth St, #114, San Francisco, CA 94107. Note: new address coming December.

One early morning in November 2001 found me and a dozen fellow journalists bouncing around the back of an ancient pick-up truck a few miles into northern Afghanistan. As we passed one bombed-out village after another, a forty-ish correspondent for Moscow radio stretched out his arms. "It's great to be back," he grinned broadly. I squinted under the white-hot sun, focusing on the spider-web shaped bullet wound running up his arm. Field surgery, courtesy of a Soviet medic. I asked why he was so pleased. "Because this time," he elaborated, "all of this crap"—he waved his other arm through the dust—"belongs to you!"

The 2001 invasion of Afghanistan was a dry run for George Bush's Iraqi oil grab. Kabul was the proving ground for new bombs and missiles destined for Baghdad. Changing rationales for war—first it was about catching Osama, then about closing al-Qaeda training camps, then liberating Afghan women—presaged the Administration's throw-every-excuse-at-the-wall-to-see-if-it-sticks strategy

for Iraq. Most of the mistakes that led to failure in Iraq were first made in the war against Afghanistan: unpopular foreign exiles appointed as puppet rulers by the CIA, failure to send enough troops to provide basic security, unsavory no-bid deals with White House-connected corporations to exploit energy resources, the torture and murder of detainees and POWs, the propping up of tribal chiefs with histories of genocide, and the deterioration of quality-of-life for the average Afghan, even when compared to the previous despotic regime. And, like the Iraq war, the Fourth Afghan War was a substitute for the war we should be fighting—against the 9/11 criminals, who were all in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

Afghanistan will again preview future failure in Iraq on October 9, when the United States will hold its first occupation-era national election. A real Afghan election? Not now, not in twenty years.

Afghanistan doesn't even have a government. Puppet president/former Unocal oil consultant Hamid Karzai is the weak, ineffectual mayor of Kabul. As Agence France reports, "Karzai has tried and largely failed to extend his control outside the capital of Kabul and into medieval-era provinces which remain under the sway of regional warlords." In 95 percent of the country, the warlords and their thuggish commanders issue visas to travel through their districts and charge entry fees to travelers. And the Taliban are back. US military officers have already ceded several large provinces to Taliban governors.

Afghan bureaucracy is non-existent. Afghans don't have passports, driver's licenses or national ID cards. Representatives of the Karzai government can't travel freely, nor do they know who lives in their country, since they have never taken a census. Estimates of the total population vary widely, between 24 and 28 million. Millions more live in Iran and Pakistan. Absentee ballots are impossible because Afghanistan doesn't have a postal system. To add to the fun, many Afghans are like Madonna—they only use one name. Because there are no phones or electricity to allow officials to crosscheck records, Madonna from Kabul can easily register as Madonna from Mazar-e-Sharif and Madonna from Kandahar. The Bushies brag that twelve million Afghans registered to vote, they leave out that only ten million are eligible.

Echoing the concerns of other watchdog agencies, a report by Human Rights Watch concludes that "there remains a high degree of political repression, and politically active Afghans in every region reported that they regularly censor themselves for fear that they might face threats or violence at the hands of factional leaders." A UN official cites a warlord from eastern Afghanistan as an example: "If the powers of warlords such as Hazrat Ali here are not curtailed, the elections will mean nothing. One of the major sources of power and authority for Hazrat Ali and his gang is his close relations with the U.S. military and intelligence. He has successfully used this relationship to harm and intimidate his political rivals. He has arrested people and constantly threatens them with sending them to Guantánamo."

The farcical Afghan election is the perfect closer for a lost war. Declare democracy so you can cut and run. If it works in Afghanistan, the Bushies plan to hold similar "elections" in Iraq in January. Of course, both countries will disintegrate into further civil war. Eventually some future superpower will come along to try its hand at Middle Eastern neocolonialism. Then we'll sit back and laugh, because our mess will all belong to them.

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NEW BOOKS: *Wake Up, You're Liberal! How We Can Take Back America From The* (Soft Skull Press, 336 pp., price $14.95), is out now, available everywhere. GENERALISSIMO *El Busho: Essays And Cartoons On The Bush Years* (NBM Publishing, 208 pp., $19.95 hardback/$15.95 paperback) is also out. I'll be speaking and signing both books at stores across the United States during October; check my Rallblog at www.rall.com for details.

POLITICAL DEBATES AS WWF TOURNAMENTS

I don't watch sports too much. I mean, I will, but I don't have a passion for one sport or one team. I can't give you statistics of players' performances and I can't deconstruct the nuances of any games' rules for you. I don't watch sports, but I guess I sort of digest politics the way a football fan would. It's very American and a little revolting; we Americans just seem to love to consume everything. That's what I was thinking when I sat at the bar yesterday with some of my housemates, watching John Edwards and Dick Cheney have a catfight on good old ABC. I mean, what they're saying actually matters in my life and that seems so silly.

The folks at the bar, nuzzling MGD longnecks and slurping pitchers of PBR, were all pretty quiet and attentive at first. After a spell of repetitive political banter, they would talk, go outside for a smoke, and then fall silent again when both candidates would, say, dodge questions regarding AIDS funding in the US. Then everyone would grumble and take an extra gulp out of frustration and the need to control their desire to not scream in public.

Americans are so goddamn repressed these days that we cannot have a calm conversation about healthcare without the Christians crossing their legs and covering their eyes. I mean, sexuality is one of the few things we all have in common, but our social climate is so fucking shamed about sex. I mean, last time I checked you could still say the word "condom" on network TV, but of course it didn't come up in response to a clear question about what each candidate believed would help in preventing the transmission of STDs.

By the time this issue comes out, we'll have a new president. Either way, the country has already been destroyed; the trees are gone, the schools have transformed into prisons, and the kids have all discovered Sparks. And though I'm dumb and naïve enough to still have hope, it's sort of futile and sad. Cuz really, this place is just an old new wave song, you know, bombs and aliens and chicks in futuristic costumes, all awaiting their inevitable doom. There is the old idea of riding out the storm, letting the waves just bring you home to the apocalypse.

A KEYCHAIN AS A HISTORICAL ARTIFACT

So the other day, I was driving a bunch of junk we found down the street from my apartment to my friends' new house. I was looking at the objects in my car, dog tags, old keychains, and my plastic red bag from the 50s (you can tell how old it is because of the metal zipper). I realized that punks study history in the form of other people's hand-me downs, donations, and trash. We study history by wearing old clothes.

A friend of mine collects IDs. Passports, driver's licenses, work passes, etc. She doesn't go through any dramatic attempt to return them to their owners, she just collects them. Maybe sometimes she has a drink and puts on a record and looks through them, wondering about the people who are represented to her as one single still image from some day passed, an address, and sometimes some sort of bar code. The stories you would make about any of us on any given day are as fluid as our identities, so there's no real science to the act of wondering.

It is a different way of studying the past, bringing it with us.

My dress is a hand-me down from a friend who bought it at a thrift store in Alabama. The dress was probably stitched together in some factory in New York sixty-five years ago, by a woman who was working to help out the war effort. Who was the woman who made the dress I wear now? Are any of her skin flakes still stuck to the fabric?

God, decay is beautiful.

You can write to me c/o *MRR*, PO Box

460760, SF, CA 94146-0760 or via email at katwrroteyouback@yahoo.com.

CrimethInc. Workers' Collective Bullet-in

Now we're coming down to the very last of our selections from *Recipes For Disaster*, our anarchist cookbook, which will finally be back from the printers by the time the issue of *MRR* following this one is out. This is a selection from the health care recipe, which also covers scamming hospital care, protecting yourself from chemical weapons, establishing street medic collectives, a couple holistic methods for cultivating a strong immune defense system through yoga, and other such matters. Once the book is out, we'll have to come up with a new theme for our column here—maybe we'll print all the recipe submissions we lacked the room to include in the book, or run stories of people getting themselves in trouble trying them out! Anyway, all the best in your own adventures, dear reader, until next time. If you want to check up on the cookbook or request free revolutionary propaganda, you can contact us at CrimethInc. Life and Death Squads, PO Box 2133, Greensboro, NC 27402 USA, or senselessly irradiate yourself at www.crimethinc.com.

How to Perform Your Own Cervical Exam

Materials

Speculum—Any gynecologist should be able to give you a plastic speculum at no cost, or you can order them in bulk over the internet. Speculums come in three sizes; try out a medium, and if it feels too large, get a small. If you can't see all the way back to your cervix, get a large. The size of the speculum you need does not correspond to the size of the rest of your body.

Mirror

Desk lamp with flexible neck, or flashlight

Lubricant or water (optional)

Have you ever seen your own cervix? Has anyone else ever seen your cervix? For most people with a cervix the answer to the first question is "no" and the answer to the second is "yes." Regularly doing your own cervical exam is one way to begin to take control of your body and your health. You can learn what is normal for you throughout your cycle and not have to trust that what a doctor sees once a year is indicative of your ongoing health. In this way, you can challenge the physician's role as sole healthcare provider and healer, and acquire knowledge about yourself that has been the doctor's alone. Self-exams allow you to catch any irritations or problems before they become severe, and, if you do need to go to a physician, the familiarity self-exams give you with your body—inside and out—makes you an informed patient, able to ask the right questions and demand full information about your condition and treatment.

Since you do them on your own, at your own pace, and in a comfortable, safe space, self-exams can be an important tool for survivors of incest or sexual abuse, people who do not have access to healthcare, and people who feel uncomfortable going to the doctor because of their sexuality, body type, herstory, or gender identity. With a self-exam, you can decide to stop if you do not feel comfortable. You can become familiar with the process of a self-exam so that you will know what to expect and be more comfortable if a doctor does the exam. Self-exams also allow you to perform routine care on your own and not rely on doctors to treat simple problems like yeast infections or trichomonas. Cervical exams can be awkward to perform on yourself, though, so another good option, if you are comfortable with it, is for trusted friends to learn how to do them on each other.

Before you do your own cervical exam, you may want to look at a book so that you know what to expect. There are books available that include full-color pictures of various vaginas and cervices in different stages of the menstrual cycle, and books that offer pictures of common infections and STDs so that you can identify them and treat yourself when appropriate.

When you are ready to do your self-exam, find a comfortable, safe space where you will not be interrupted—most people prefer to do self-exams on their beds. Get into a comfortable position: try leaning back on some pillows at about a 45-degree angle, with your knees up and open. Remember to have your mirror and desk lamp or flashlight within arm's reach. Try opening and locking your speculum in position a couple of times before actually inserting it, until you are comfortable with how it works. Insert the speculum by spreading the inner lips of your vagina with two fingers of one hand, holding the bills of the speculum tightly together with the thumb and index finger of the other hand, and guiding it into vaginal canal. You can use water-soluble lubricant or water to make insertion easier. You may want to insert the speculum sideways initially, then turn it with the handles still pinched together until the handles are facing up. Once the handles are facing up, open the bills and lock the speculum in position. Do this by sliding the short handle down and the long handle up—when you hear a click, the speculum is locked into place. This will stretch the vagina open and reveal the vaginal canal and cervix. With the speculum locked, you can adjust the placement of the mirror and your light source. It is best not to leave the speculum unattended: the muscles in your vagina can push the speculum out even while it is locked open, which can be very painful. Keep one hand on it if you can! If you are using a flexible-necked lamp, aim the light at your vaginal opening and use the mirror to see what it illuminates. If you only have a flashlight, hold it in your mouth and aim it at the mirror, which will reflect light into the speculum. With proper positioning of the mirror and light, you should be able to give yourself a thorough exam.

What you can see: vaginal walls, vaginal secretions (if any), cervix (the neck of the uterus), os (the opening of the cervix), and any irritations (e.g., yeast, trichomonas, bacterial infections). Throughout your monthly cycle, you can see changes in the color, texture, and secretions of your cervix: these are all indications of whether or not you are fertile, and where you are in your cycle. Take a look at the outside of the vagina and the vaginal walls. Become familiar with what this part of your body looks like, and look for any irritations, bumps, or blemishes. Next, take a look at your cervix. The cervix may not be immediately in view: if you can't see it, remove the speculum and try moving around, jumping up and down (really, this works!), or moving to a firmer surface. Your cervix may be directly in line with the speculum, or it may be off to one side if you have what is called a "tipped uterus." This is perfectly normal, as everyone's uterus is tipped in some way. Your cervix might be pink and smooth, have reddish blemishes, or even be rough and splotchy. Depending on where you are in your menstrual cycle, there may be fluid coming out of it (especially if you are ovulating) or it may be very dry.

If you see blemishes or bumps that worry you, go to a gynecologist and ask her to look at them, and get a pap smear. Most likely, they are perfectly normal, and you will know for the future that these spots are just part of your body. Because of the changes that your body undergoes throughout your monthly cycle, you may want to do a self-exam at the same time each month so you can spot irregularities. You may also want to do them at different times of the month, so you can watch the changes and become familiar with your body throughout its cycle.

Self-exams can enable you to identify infections and STDs before you even feel them. Consult friends or a book to help you identify any problems. There are several books and 'zines that are good resources for identifying infections and treating yourself in safe and effective ways. Some of the infections you may be able to spot include: an infection (swelling) of the vulvovaginal glands; yeast infections, which will result in heavy, clumpy discharge; trichomonas, indicated by yellow or greenish secretion, foul odor, and heavy discharge on cervix; non-specific vaginitis, which causes heavy or runny yellow or greenish discharge from an overgrowth of bacteria, usually with a strong odor; active herpes sores; an

infection of the cervical canal (bacteria from gonorrhea or another bacterial infection can enter the cervical canal and cause the cervix to become red and tender and produce a very heavy discharge); and cysts on the cervix, which can grow and shrink throughout the cycle, but generally do not hurt or cause problems.

Doing a self-exam with a group of friends can be a great way to learn more about your bodies, share information, and be supported. You can observe and compare your own and your friends' vaginas, clitorises, and cervices. You can learn first hand about the incredible variations between people's bodies and the variations during the monthly cycle and different stages of sexual arousal. In comparing your bodies to illustrations in anatomy textbooks, you may notice that you and your friends have parts that are not in the books. This does not mean that anything is wrong with you: it just attests to the fact that the medical industry often tries to simplify our bodies, which are in fact very diverse and complex.

A self-exam is a simple but empowering act—don't keep this information to yourself! Do a workshop on giving self-exams; create a space for doing a group self-exam or for people who have done self-exams on their own to discuss what they saw; show your cervix to your sexual partners (whether or not they have cervixes themselves) or friends; take pictures of it; talk about your body; write a 'zine about it... For too long, our bodies have been represented and misrepresented by the medical industry. We have been made to feel disconnected from our bodies and to be passive about our health. For our liberation and our survival, we must take back this knowledge and relearn ourselves.

Last month, the column that I wanted to send but never got all the way finished sent greetings from the Hit-Four-Times-in-Six-Weeks-Hurricane-State. As my good luck would have it, I live in one of the only two out of sixty-something counties that escaped relatively unscathed. We never even lost power though several of our immediate neighbors did for days. Thousands around the state are still living in shelters because they lost a lot more than their connection to the grid.

While people scrambled around working to get things back to normal, I had some cabin-fever time on my hands for a few days. County-wide school closure, my work place closed, curfews, cops blocking all beach access, businesses prohibited from being open and punished with hefty fines if they were, and kids whose apartments were without power coming over to go nuts with my daughter in their own special pre-K cabin fever way pushed me past my normal, loopy-but-functional levels.

I dreamt up a Bush Family conspiracy. After all, the president's brother Jeb! is the governor of Florida. After how he helped hand over Florida's Electoral College votes to his bro in 2000, I just knew he was up to it again, though I wasn't exactly sure how he brokered a nasty deal with Mother Nature herself to rip up the poorer mobile home communities. After all, the Bushies and Mother Nature are official enemies.

But none the less, I did think of how convenient is was that those hardest hit by these natural disasters—you know, the population most likely to vote for Democrats—might be unable to vote due to not having access to their polling places come election time some two months after the hurricane. Florida law states that it's a felony to vote at any precinct other than the one assigned to you according to where you reside. And if your residence simply doesn't exist anymore or has been condemned and your current residence is the middle school gymnasium—even if that same middle school gymnasium is a polling place—unless it's the one you've been assigned to vote at, it seems you're shit outta luck. You could always vote by mail, but a lot of those absentee ballots in 2000 sure did have their way of not getting counted.

I thought I had it all figured out. I was ready to start my conspiracy campaign when I heard on NPR a week later that in fact it was the strong Republican voting areas of Florida that got ripped apart by the back-to-back hurricanes the most. So my theory was defeated, but I still wouldn't put it past Jeb! to do everything in his power to disenfranchise as many potential Florida Democrat voters as possible—again. If he could actually figure out a way to control the weather as if in a sinister cartoon plot staring his Alfred E. Newman-esque brother, he would. The bright side of defeat was that I could still respect Mother Nature. She knew all along whose collective asses to kick in Florida, and she hadn't made a deal with the devil after all.

Now it's October 2004, but by the time this comes to print, the Presidential Election will have come and gone.

Maybe all of big brother president Bush's photo-opting and campaigning around the hardest hit areas of Florida will have gotten him some votes. Maybe Jeb! again used his dubious dealing power in the State to get Dubya's residential lease at the White House renewed. My magic eight-ball told me that "It Is Certain" when I asked if there were going to be more major fuck-ups in Florida on Election Day. As reliable as my magic eight-ball is, my crystal ball is still cloudy after all the Hurricanes. I can't clearly see if there will be a break in the weather with Kerry or if there are more back-to-back Bush storms swirling on the horizon. So, I decided to at least lay claim to my neighborhood's precinct.

This morning, I sat in one of my community's senior citizens centers for three assnumbing hours attending a pollworker training session. As the Barbie and Ken retirement-team trainers condescendingly read us the same information booklet we all had right in front of us, and actively discouraged any questions the entire time, I was reassured as to why I was raising my hand to work as the CEO of my neighborhood's polling place for the day.

If it weren't already somewhat obvious, it became glaringly apparent that it's only the super close races that require re-count after re-count that reveal the ugly, permanent cracks in the election process. With the way elections continue to be conducted, there are always people who are illegitimately disenfranchised and votes that don't get counted for no good reason.

Living in Broward County, Florida, otherwise known as Majorly Fucked Up Presidential Election 2000 Headquarters, I can't resist the temptation of being on the front lines of what promises to be a high-excitement media frenzy. Maybe—just maybe—I'll get to sound byte my way into some journalist's story about any glitches in the system that prevented someone from having a say in government.

(And no, I don't really think that touching an iVotronic screen to mark which of the Washington Elite nimrods you despise the least equals having an actual say in government. But since it's the only avenue I think we've got right now to at least get rid of the current administration, I'll go there. And with how hard the Bush team fought to steal the election last time, it's gotta be worth something!)

And then maybe the system by which leaders are elected will eventually be re-evaluated and then scrapped and reinvented to allow for inclusion of more people. Direct democracy, anyone? OK, I'll admit it's a big dream seeped in ideology. It's better than loopy conspiracy, isn't it?

Barbie and Ken, however, repeatedly warned us against talking to "them," because "they" will be digging for any "bad" news they can get their microphones on. They were very aware that all eyes would be on Florida on November 2nd because there had already been bad press after the Primary Election held on August 31, 2004. Broward County and our neighbors to the south, Miami-Dade County, made it into a September 7, 2004 New York Times editorial that exposed some of those two

county's election officials' misstatement of the law that allows registered voters to vote without showing identification. Their misstatement ultimately tried to keep eligible voters from voting. The editorial stated, "Florida's voter-identification law is inartfully written. It says photo identification is required at the polls, but it goes on to give voters without such identification an alternative: signing affidavits swearing to their identities. By that reasoning, Florida voters who show up without identification should be told that they can vote as long as they fill out affidavits.

And it continued with another example of how some people in another county may never have cast ballots because they were not informed that they had the option to file affidavits, "The misstatement of the law goes beyond a few bad poll workers. Osceola County's sample ballot, mailed out before the election, said 'Photo and Signature ID Required at the Polls,' and it did not tell voters they could in fact vote without identification. Secretary of State Glenda Hood, who should be on the voters' side, instead backs this misleading summary of the law."

I wanted to heckle Barbie and Ken and ask them exactly what about truth being exposed scares them the most. Could it be that their job as poll worker trainers would be in jeopardy if the truth were to get out again about some badly trained poll workers? Or are they just shirking responsibility? I wanted to ask them if the rumors were true that Michael Moore would be in Broward County on November 2nd to document its handling of the election process, that if it scared them that it was Michael Moore who popularized Greg Palast's investigative journalism work that first exposed the true dirty dealings of the 2000 Election.

Instead, I saved all my questions about which color form is used for rectifying which potential problem that would stand in the way of someone being allowed to vote. When their lecture was over, I approached them and didn't leave until I had all the answers I needed.

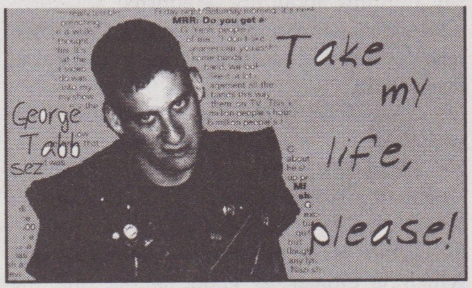
As the almighty buck-stops-here Clerk of the Precinct, I will be able to do everything I can to ensure that when someone shows up to vote, some misapplied voter-identification rule will not prevent him/her from being able to do so. (Though whether the vote ultimately gets counted is entirely out of my hands. I am an Election Official, but I ain't that official.)

So this is what a CEO power trip feels like? How totally exciting that I've even got the authority to kick a cop out of my polling place unless s/he's there to vote. Even then, "Vote and be on your way!" is what I'll say. Even if there's a fellow pollworker mutiny against me and my democracy-ensuring ways, I can call Headquarters and get the lot of them replaced with more obedient ones. Ha! But wait, that'd be too much like union-busting and fraternizing with scabs, wouldn't it be? OK, forget it, I'll just hope to have power over a cop for once.

If anything exciting like that happens, I'll be sure to let you know.

Though it's impossible to see what that future day holds, I'm sure to be exhausted after what promises to be a 17 plus hour day with no actual breaks. Hopefully, there won't be a legal lifting of the democratic goods and John Kerry will be elected President of the USA. Of course that doesn't mean all of a sudden things got a whole lot better than they are now. More than likely, if Kerry does win the election, lame duck GeeDubya will be wreaking more havoc from now until Kerry's inauguration than he did from the time he took office in January 2001until November 2004. But at least it will be a step away from the absolute goon power that shouldn't have been allowed in the first place.

Punk parents, get in touch. PO Box 220331 / Hollywood, FL 33022 or yardwideyarns@hotmail.com



"You should try and grow some sideburns," this drunk girl tells me at The Merc Bar here in Phoenix. "To go along with that smell".

"Why?" I ask her, she of the over-priced purse and shoes, as I stare at the floor too nervous to make eye contact.

Her hair is too blonde, and her eyes too blue.

"It would make you cool," she explains.

I start to get pissed and wish I'd driven the extra seven miles to The Emerald Lounge, where my pals Brian, Greg, and Scene are most likely busy behind the bar, not having to listen to this sort of shit all night.

"Cool?" I ask. "Let me tell you about cool," I tell her, "and sideburns!"

•••

"Kirk to Enterprise," I say into the Samsung cell phone model number #SCH-8500 that I'm holding at arms length at The Mars Bar in New York's Lower East Side.

"What the fuck are you doing, Tabb?" asks the drunk guy with the reddish-blonde hair whose name I can never remember but pretend to know.

"Calling my ship," I explain to the guy, who had earlier asked me to tell him his name as proof that I knew it.

"Your ship?" he asks, as he slobbers Rolling Rock all over my black denim vest with the Dwarves pin, The Furious George pin, and my new Jones Crusher pin.

"Yeah," I tell the guy, who I told that if he made me repeat his name it would be not only an insult to me, but to him as well. He just nodded his head and agreed.

I look at the Samsung cell phone model number #SCH-8500, which also connects to the internet, as it dials my home. When I hear my answering machine pick up, I hang up. I guess PJ, my seven-pound Yorkshire terrier wasn't home.

"Mr. Spock isn't there, Tabb?" says my drooling pal.

"He must be in Engineering with Scottie," I tell the St. Bernard.

"You smell good," he says, putting his nose right up to my neck.

"It's Jovan Musk For Men," I explain, feeling his cold snot against my warm skin.

"Smells nice," he says.

I again flip open the Samsung cell phone model number #SCH-8500, which, with its metallic look, is almost a dead ringer for an old school Star Trek Communicator. Not like those new pussy ones on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

"Beam me up, Scottie" I say into the phone, then quickly finish the rest of my double shot of Jose Cuervo, the fine alcoholic beverage I have been enjoying for the past few months.

The phone starts to dial and then someone loudly says, "Hello?"

"Scottie!" I say into the Samsung cell phone model number #SCH-8500.

"How'd you do that?" says the drunk with the reddish-blonde hair.

"Voice Recognition Software," I tell the guy.

"What's that?" he asks.

"Hello?" says the voice on the phone, "is that you playing with that damn phone again, George?"

I tell my step-dad, Nick, to hang on, that I am at Mars Bar, and I am explaining VRS and cellular technology to a drunk guy.

He tells me he has better things to do at three in the morning, like sleep, and hangs up.

Step-dads.

Geez.

"I bet that thing uses alien technology they stole from Roswell," the drunk guy tells me as he walks over to the pinball machine, where he starts to play some game where you rack up points for nailing little green men.

"Probably," I tell him as I put the Samsung cell phone model number #SCH-8500 in my vest pocket and order another double shot of Jose Cuervo.

"Can I try it?" he asks. He lets his first ball slide past the flippers only scoring a thousand or so points.

"If you buy me my drink," I tell him.

Just then the bartender interrupts our conversation to inform me that I have dirt all over the sides of my face.

"It must be because I was looking at my picture in *The New York Waste*. The ink must

have rubbed off," I tell her.

"It doesn't look like ink," the drunk guy at the pinball machine tells me."

I touch the sides of my face and feel it. Them. The fuzzy things I'd been growing for over a month.

My sideburns.

"They're sideburns!" I exclaim loudly, "You noticed!"

"Looks like dirt to me," says the bartender as she pours me a drink and doesn't let me pay.

"This took me over four weeks!" I say, pointing to my face.

"Ain't puberty a bitch," says the guy at the pinball machine, as he misses his second ball.

Ha.

"By the way," says the bartender, "what's that smell?"

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A few nights later I find myself at The Continental checking out Nashville Pussy after a Furious George set. The Pussy's new album, *High As Hell*, has rocked my world for the past few weeks, and I am more than ready to see them play live again.

"Hey George," says Noel, my pal who books and does sound at the club, as I walk up to the mixing board.

"How'd you know it was me?" I ask. Noel had not moved his eyes from the many black knobs he was futzing around with.

"Your smell," he tells me.

"Jovan Musk For Men," I tell him.

"I know, I know," Noel replies.

"So what do you think?" I ask Noel, as I point to my face.

"About?" he asks.

I point to my sideburns.

"Uh-huh," says Noel.

I tell him that these sideburns are very Nashville Pussy-ish. That they epitomize rednecks and white trash. And that I so much want to be trailer trash.

"You're a Jew," he tells me.

"What?" I yell, "Jews can't be redneck white trash?"

"If you grow them long they could be payess' like the Orthodox Jews have," Noel explains to me.

I tell him to go back to mixing the bands and leave him to show off my burns in the downstairs hallway near the bathrooms and in the "backstage" room.

"Hey George," says some tall hot chick, "how are you?"

I tell her I'm fine, drinking lots of Jose Cuervo, and can't wait to see Nashville Pussy.

Just then my bass player, Mini-Me, walks up to both of us. Well, he really isn't "Mini-Me" anymore. Although he still wears black women's stretch jeans like me, New Balance sneakers like me, a black t-shirt like me, and a denim vest like me, he now has brown hair instead of bleached blonde.

"How you doin'?" Mini-Me, errr, Stevie says to us.

"What's that smell?" the girl suddenly asks, "it smells so good!"

I'm about to tell her that it's Jovan Musk For Men, and that I, as well as Stevie, wear the stuff.

"Fahrenheit," replies Stevie.

My jaw drops to the ground as the hot chick starts to sniff my bass players neck, then put her arms around his shoulders.

"How you doin'?" Stevie repeats.

I feel ready to bash his skull in. First he changes his hair? And now his scent? Et tu, Brutè?

"You smell really sexy," the girl tells Stevie, and asks if she can buy him a drink.

"How you doin'?" Stevie says for a third time, then begins to walk away with the chick.

"Wait," I yell to her, "You didn't even say anything about my sideburns!"

"What sideburns?" she asks. She then tells Stevie how nice and smooth and baby-faced he is.

"Norelco Triple Action Blade," he explains.

I hear her giggle as she walks him up the stairs.

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After Nashville Pussy's awesome set, which is almost as good as the one the Dwarves had put on in the same club a couple of weeks earlier, I find myself out front on the sidewalk.

"Great show, eh?" I say to Michael, my drummer, as I turn my face side to side to see if he'll notice what he hadn't noticed at the past four rehearsals. My sideburns.

"They fucking rock, dude," he tells me.

"The singer has kick ass sideburns," I say, fishing for a compliment on mine.

"Who cares about that?" he says, "didn't you see the girl guitarist deep throat that beer bottle?"

I ignored him and hailed a cab. I'd had enough for one night.

"Where to?" asks the cabbie with a name like Singvh Mohammed, Mohammed Signvh, or Singvh Inda Rain.

I tell him the City Hall District and he just stares at me.

I give him the address and he goes, "Oh, Tribeca".

As he makes his way down Third Avenue, and over to Broadway, he blasts a Heart song on the radio.

"Can you please turn it down?" I ask him. Jose Cuervo had decided to play drums in my head along with the fat ladies from Heart.

"Rock musician?" he asks.

I look at his eyes in the rear-view mirror, and they are fixed upon my guitar case.

"Yes," I scream.

"Hard rock?" he asks.

"Yes," I scream again, knowing I should really say "punk rock," but not wanting the conversation.

"I like hard rock," he says, and then turns the Heart song up even louder.

He drives for a while saying nothing. Finally after the Heart song ends, he turns the radio down and speaks again.

"Colon?" he asks.

"Excuse me?" I say, wondering if the guy likes anal sex along with his hard rock.

"Colon?" he asks again.

"Yes I have one," I tell him. And it was beginning to hurt.

"No," he says, "When you get into cab, it smells. Colon?"

Knowing damn well that I washed my ass earlier, as I always do, I try to figure out what he is saying.

"Cologne?" I finally ask.

"Yes, Colon!" he replies. "What kind?"

"Why?" I ask him, and then, not waiting for an answer, I tell him it's Jovan Musk For Men.

"Joe who?" he asks.

At this point, Jose Cuervo is not only playing drums in my head, he's taken up guitar, bass, tuba, and jackhammer as well.

"Jovan Musk For Men," I repeat.

"Oh, says the cabbie, as he writes it down on a pad of paper, "Oh-von Musk For Men!"

"It's Jovan," I say, pronouncing the "J".

"I know," says the cabbie as he shows the pad of paper to me where he spelled it correctly, "but the 'yay' is not pronounced.

"Uh-huh," I say, praying I'll get home any second, and that the cabbie doesn't try to kiss me goodnight.

"It smell good. Do jew get lot of girl with it?" he asks.

"Yes, lots of them," I tell him.

"Very good! Yes! I like lot of girl!" he exclaims.

Just then we pull up to my building and he stops the cab and speaks.

"I go buy colon tomorrow to get American girls."

I tell him that that's a good idea as I pay him his fare and exit his cab.

As I'm closing the door he says, "Jew have nice sideburns".

And with that he speeds off into the night, leaving my jaw wrapped around my ankles.

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Endnote

1. www.georgetabb.com

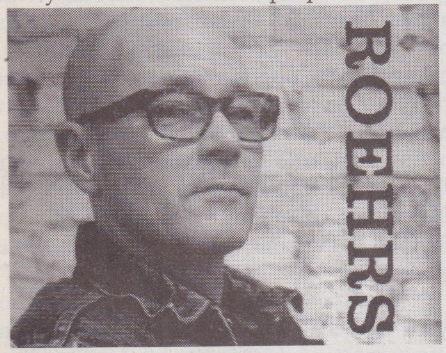
2. Got some great CDs this month. I mean, fucking great. The new DWARVES album is one of them. Others include TOTALLY RADD and 14 YEAR OLD GIRLS on Retard Disco Records. The music is so geeky it reminds me of the early days of punk. Plus, how can you go wrong with songs about video games? Speaking of geeky, SCREAM CLUB'S new CD fits in very nicely. As does The GRAVY TRAIN DVD I also got from

Retard Disco. They have song called "Ghost Boobs" that rocks in a very strange sorta way. Another cool DVD is from Rockin' Bones Videozine, and has interviews and music by the new DEAD KENNEDYS as well as TSOL, UK SUBS, THE QUEERS, and tons more. It's a great DVD and you should buy it!

3. Roller Derby is real big out here, and I just wanna make a shout out to our local stars, and my pal, Sue Nami! Also to Hadda Bad Day out in L.A.! You guys rock—so now that I said it, don't beat me up!

4. Again, join myspace.com and come find me! Also, if you are very lucky, you'll find one of the editors of this zine as well! I just wish he'd stop posting about how big his penis is! Everyone knows that mine is bigger.

5. *Playing Right Field: A Jew Grows In Greenwich* is the name of my first and new book out in stores now! Please go and read it! Buy it or borrow it, but don't steal it. That would piss off my publisher, Soft Skull, who are by far the coolest book people ever!



Straight to Hell

Fuck yes! New Jersey's resident drunken skinhead heroes HEADWOUND are back with a bang! The new CD on Haunted Town Records is called *GinMill*. Choppie handles the vocal duties with the experience that only many years in the Oi! trenches can provide. HEADWOUND start out slammin' with "Part Time Resident." Check it out: "On and on, there's nothing left to say / But we keep writing lyrics anyway / On and on the cycle never ends / Well I guess that's pretty damn good but it all depends / As time goes by I've heard a lot / Like what's of interest, what is not / As time goes by, I'll take the hint / I'm a part time resident, resident, resident / Clean my room and change my underwear / Cause you never know what fruits this day will hear / Kiss the dog goodbye, feed the cat / It's cold outside so maybe I'll wear a hat / You get it made, you're healthy and strong / Life is good and nothing can go wrong / I'm just in awe apart from it all / I can't be your rock of Gibraltar / On and on you act like there's no clue / But there's a reason for everything we do / Done and gone, it's time to start again / Well, I guess that's pretty damn good but it all depends." Fuck yes!

The second tune on this is "Trashbag." Give these harsh lyrics a try: "What do you want from me? / Nothings ever free / If you think it should be / We'll have to wait and see / You think you deserve / To stand up and be heard? / I think that's absurd / Cause I think you're a turd / Once upon a short lived time, I gave you my respect / Now I knew your little mind is starting to infect / Don't care what you say / Don't care what you play / You're not here to stay / Use once and throw away / I just think your dumb / I hope yer having fun / Your voice is coming from / Underneath my thumb / Once upon a very short time, I gave you my respect / Now I know my time with you is time I regret / I don't want you! / You're a trashbag!"

Harry – guitar, Quincy – bass, and Johnny – drums, nail down the tough Oi! Sound on *GinMill*!

Number three is a tribute to uh…sharing sexual partners. You don't need too much information on this one. Song number four is "White Knuckle Love", about HEADWOUND's romantic pursuits – read on: "Where were you last night? / couldn't see me, didn't call me / Now I feel out of place / All I see is your face / Had to go, there was a fire / My sister had a blown out tire / Let me make it up to you / Don't get mad, I know what we can do / It was good for why can't you see / That you don't have a clue / Just ask yourself a question / Was it good for you too? / I'll call you up on Thursday / And we'll date now and then / But for now just hold on tight until the count of ten / Here we go again, another fight / Let's talk about it another night / Now I feel out of place / All I see is your face / Had to feed the neighbor's cat / had to fix my brother's flat / let me make it up to you / Don't get mad I know what we can do / Who is she? Is she pretty? / Just tell me, I won't get angry / Now I feel out of place / All I see is your face / Had to fix my father's car Had to set the VCR / Let me make it up to you / Don't get made, I know what we can do."

Song number five is a tribute to Man's best friend: "3 Cheers for Beer." This is one theme that occurs with frequency in all New Jersey Oi!, from the WRETCHED ONES to NIBLICK HENBANE to THOSE UNKNOWN. Read the words to this heartfelt love song: "Come join us at a place where we all like to hang it / There's ten or twelve of us, but this ain't no fucking banquet / We ain't got fancy clothes and our hair ain't combed just right / This is why we're all here tonight / It's flowing like the gods had planned as cold as winter chill / So sit your ass down at the bar and drink to get your fill / You've got no choice at all, so let's enjoy this amber blight / Hip hip hooray, let's drink tonight / Hey hey hey / It's how we planned it / Hey hey hey / Sit and slam it / Hey hey hey / You know what? / Hip hip hooray / this is my lucky day / This is why we're here, thee cheers for beer / Everyone make way, we're never gonna stray / Let's get another tray, three cheers for beer!"

Song six is "Forklift Operator." A song celebrating the blue-collar men and women of this great country is always welcome on a New Jersey Oi! CD. Read "Forklift Operator": "I get to work and it looks like fun / Can't wait for break so I can get away from everyone / Punch the clock, get my gloves and goggles on / Gotta lead the truck, get the skids to the shipping yard / I've got two hard hats, they're white and blue / I need a pallet jack to get these pallets out for you / There's nothing else that I can do / Some corrugated some metal screws / And I know I'll be out in not too long / I don't know where the time has gone / It's easy when you don't admit to anyone / Here is where I belong / I wanna be a forklift operator / Work at a place with a c.o. dot incorporated / I wanna be a forklift operator / And operate machinery out-dated / I've got a skill, gonna do my best / Gonna score an 80 on the warehouse safety drivers test / Videotape, my drivers guide / Up and down, side to side."

Song seven is an excellent cover of an old song, "Tossin'-n-Turnin'" by Bobby Lewis. HEADWOUND tears this old nugget a new asshole! Song number eight is "Punk You Want," which puts some of the politically correct punks on notice—HEADWOUND is *not* the "Punk You Want." Read this: "We're not the punk that it's supposed to be / We play without the anarchy / Just hope it's sounding good / The way that punk rock should / We don't care what the people want / We don't care if our hair's not blonde / Just hope it's sounding fine/ Cause we're the cheese without the wine, so…/ We're not the punk rock you want / We're not the punk rock you want / Don't care about history / That's not our strategy, cause / We're not the punk rock you want, that you want / We don't sing about politics / And there's no blazing guitar licks / Just hope we're all in tune / While we're playing to an empty room / You think you know what punk is for / While you're playing on your world wide tour / And you claim that you're working class / Then get a job and stop the act, cause…/ You're not the punk rock we want / You're not the punk rock we want / Before you write you better think / You don't work, you don't dink, No! / You're not the punk rock we want, that we want / We don't care what you get up your sleeve / You tend to write what people believe / Your reviews and your red, white and pink / You care about what people think / You tend to see the forest for the trees / We're full of rock and we aim to please / Got no regrets and got no disease / Just wounded head, so take a seat please."

Song number nine is a cover of John Denver's "Leaving on a Jet plane." This tune will work once or twice on sheer novelty value, then you may prefer to pass it by. Song ten is a good closer. "Straight to Hell" cuts to

the chase—read these optimistic lyrics: "We were brought late this world / Not one of us had a clue / No one could ignore us / And we didn't want them to / Our parents tried to warn us / 'Bout the path that we would choose / but if we put our heads together / there ain't no way we'll lose / We took the unknown road / With the chance that we would fall / Some came to bat for one another / Some ended up in jail / We chose this way of life / It was a chance we had to take / A pretty tough decision / No one else could ever make / Oi! Oi! / Right on time / Oi! Oi! / Stand in line / Oi! Oi! / Hold on tight / Oi! Oi! / Enjoy the ride / Because we're going straight to hell / Everybody join the chorus / Ya gotta believe, that's the way it's gotta be / Count on Satan, he'll be waitin' there for us / If I did it any different Would I've ended up the same / Was there something in the formula / I could've, I should've changed / Nothing you can do / It's too late, it's said and done / Then you come to realize / That your time has just begun / When you're thinkin' 'bout the past / seems you made a big mistake / Think back on the times / When you had all that you could take / When you've lost all your control / Feels like your doin' time on earth / Ask yourself the question / 'How could hell be any worse?"

Yes! This is another fine HEADWOUND album that you skinheads and punk rockers need in your collection! Write to Haunted Town Records, 1658 N. Milwaukee Ave, #169, Chicago, IL 60647, USA; www.hauntedtownrecords.com.

BLOODSTAINS from the great northeast (Massachusetts) has a rocking punk CD prepared for you fucks! The BLOODSTAINS present their new CD *A Darker Shade of Black*. BLOODSTAINS come out hard hitting with "Low Life" and then crash into "Hard as Nails". Read this one: "We've all got frustration and we've all got aggravation / And we've all made mistakes, but we've learned / We've all got hate inside us / Everyone tries to deny us / Can't take away what we have earned / We don't need your charity / Just want an opportunity / Cuz we all know life's a bitch / Stay hard as nails and don't give an inch / I know you try to find a job and they stare at you like you're gonna rob them / You've got that look so you can't earn a wage / I know when you go to school and the teacher treats you like a fool / Trouble at home? / Who doesn't this day and age? / We all get denied a future / But we keep trying harder / It's no excuse to fall into a role / You've got to stand up for yourself / Stop waiting for everyone else / If it's your life, why don't you take control?"

Next up you get "Live Fast Tonight", about seizing the moment. Next is "One Up Salute" and "Fuck 'Em All". Read a bit of "Fuck 'Em All": "Out all night until the sun comes up / Sleep all day / Never give a fuck / Blood on your knuckles / Broken down van / Fuck anybody that doesn't understand / Cuz this is where I want to be / Fuck 'em all / it's the life for me / they want to say I'm out of line / Fuck 'em all / They're not worth my time / We're the no future kids along for the ride / Every night's like a drawn out suicide / Degeneration in sleazy bars / Punk rockers and amateur porno stars / Fuck 'em all."

BLOODSTAINS plow through "Get Chipped", "Scene Slut" (a real rocker), "End of the Line" (another good tune), and "Shadow". Song number ten is "Bought and Sold", and this is a fine punk rock tune with fancy guitar parts and great vocals. If you like "Mommy's Little Monster" era SOCIAL DISTORTION, you will like this! Read the words to "Bought and Sold." "Let me tell you a story about a dead end road / Go to school for twelve years and you've got nothing to show / Laughed at the thought of college but can't find a way to leave / They told me I would stay here, but I didn't want to believe / Bought and sold / Been selling my life to a nowhere job / Bought and sold / And now I feel like I've been robbed / Don't have any skills just a strong back / As long as I can give, there's more that you'll take / With the broken promises that I've heard from you / Don't want to sell my life to something I hate to do / Never thought of myself a loser / I had dreams to achieve / Never saw myself a failure / I had things I wanted to be / But the door of opportunity is shutting / And I'm feeling left in the cold / Don't want to stay an unskilled laborer / Don't want to be bought and sold."

Song eleven is a cover of "John Wayne Gacy" by the AUGUST SPIES. This is a very good song! Song twelve is the title song, "A Darker Shade of Black." This is powerful shit! Read up! "Everything that could has gone wrong / How long can this go on? / A losing streak / I'm going nowhere fast / Every new day is worse than the last / Just when you thought it couldn't get any worse / Here comes a darker shade of black / Feeling low / Gotta find a way out / Is this what it's all about? / Dark days become darker years / How did I ever end up here?"

This is a very good street rock/punk CD. For your copy, contact the band at www.bloodstains.org or the label at www.ammoniarecords.com.

The STAGE BOTTLES, from Germany, have another fucking great melodic street rock CD available for you punks and skins. These left leaning anti-fascist political skinheads present the CD entitled *We Need A New Flag*. This is great emotionally-charged, melodic Oi! with lots of hooks and even some saxophones in just the right places. The STAGE BOTTLES start out strong with "Millions of Stupid People," which is somewhat self explanatory: "Causing wars / Dropping bombs / Killing people in the name of love / What else will they do in the name of love?"

The second song is the title cut, "New Flag". Read some of these pertinent lyrics: "Is this stage the last / Ideals killed by the past / Capitalism grows fast / Freedom for money, for a rich man's honey / For the upper class it's obviously funny / I see ignorance, and intolerance / Indicators for democracy / Violence – they won't give you a chance / Indicators for freedom? No! No! / Where is an opposition / With a new position / And an honest ambition / A new rhetoric start – ideals / Straight from the heart / I want to break free – want to set me free / Me and the majority / I'd like to build a pool – where everyone's cool / Find a new political school / We need a new flag / To set us free / We need a new flag to start history / We need a new flag / Just watch reality / And fight this economy! / The Stars and Stripes – The Union Jack / Yellow stars on a read ground – black, red and gold / A half moon on a green ground – A Christian cross / All these flags and emblems, are already misused / There's no way back / The original meaning, changed to the opposite / So we've got to get rid of it / So we've got to resist, we'll build a new base / We've got to fight / Imperialism of any kind, tries to stop us / Fucks up our minds / A colour for this, and a colour for that / One colour for everything / Mix up the best / Pick out the best and – fuck the rest!"

That's a very good song! Next up you get a tune that really gives a strong opinion about some of the aspects of skinhead life. Read the lyrics to "Real Skinhead": "Oi! You stupid bastards, just wake up/ And think about / Where your culture comes from / Oi! It's not just having fights / Dancing and drinking / Dreaming up and owning many records / Oi! It's fighting back / So you should feel / Like a suburban rebel / Oi! Social difference is the reason / Employees / Are still exploited / Oi! Fred Perry was a Jew and Levi, too / Black music / The movement source / Oi! Is kicking out the stupid racists / So let / the kids be united / Oi! Don't influence the younger ones / By telling much / Without saying anything / Oi! Skinhead's not stupid culture / You're not allowed to switch your brain off / Real Skinhead!!! / Oi! You're singing songs about a teenage warning / About not / Showing the white flag / Oi! don't talk about a way of life / Though for you / There's no deeper meaning / Oi! is feeling pride / But just posing / Is no reason to be proud / Oi! So skinhead is a different thing / Your infiltration will be stopped."

The STAGEBOTTLES amble through "That's Where It Comes From," "Bad Boys," "It's Your Kids Life," "Punk and Disorderly," and they arrive at "PC Idiots." Give these lyrics a spin: "They are talking about a revolution / They need the mass of people / (That's what they need!) / But I've got the impression / For them the mass is just a tool

/ (A tool!) / They can't accept individuals / They can't accept difference in their circle / PC-Idiots! / They can't accept a different childhood / They can't accept proletarian behaviour / PC-Idiots / They can't accept that others can't accept, too / They can't accept there's not only one way / PC-Idiots / The way they act is wrong—nobody's listening / They expect everyone behaves like them / They're not able to handle difference / No way for a revolutionary base."

The STAGEBOTTLES continue with the excellent street punk playing "I Wanna Break Out," and then "Kick Out the Parasites," which deals with the way soccer has been compromised by money. Read these words: "Everybody's talking about money/ Achievements in sports and capital / It seems the only question is / What does a player cost today? / What does he cost tomorrow? / Associations are not independent / Rich clubs are giving out the rules / Important for the management is / Who is getting more than others? / Who is getting less? / So if you support a small club / The chance for big success is really small / Supporters are just ticket-numbers / Businessman are the club's heart / What about me / Am I just a currency? / What about us? / Let's make a fuss / 'Cause personal relationships / Disappear for championships / It's a sell out / That's what it's all about / Supporters are easily called criminals / Non-conformed behaviour – punishment / Conformity means to consume / The way you've got to act is / "Shut up and pay high prices!" / "Over a hundred years ago / City-quarters founded football clubs / Expression of a community / A way to find identity / Structures of solidarity / Oh…Save our sports – Oh…Save the roots / Oh…Save your clubs – Oh… / And kick the parasites out!"

For song number twelve you get "All You Need is Hate" and this is quite a strong number. Read these cutting lyrics: "They see a skinhead walking down the street / The judgment day has come again / If they can feel it they hate you with fear / But what we feel is real hate / Now we know where it comes from / That we are different / It's our Skinhead life / And we know / It was society that made us to what we're ? / So don't blame me / You never know / When we run at you / We are feeling real hate / And that makes us feel much better / Oppressing people in other countries / Killing! Killing for love / For love to your fucking money / One day we're gonna kill you / You fucking fat cunts, you bastards / In your business suits – fuck off! / Grey hair, grey clothes, grey thoughts / Be sure – your colours are not ours!"

The STAGEBOTTLES finish up in fine style with "Hooligan." This is a very good CD! For your copy of *We Need a New Flag*, write to Insurgence Records, 2 Bloor Street, W, Suite 100-184, Toronto, Ontario, M4W 3E2, Canada; www.insurgence.net.

Until next month, see you at the bar!

One of the things I've discovered on a long list of things learned over the past few months is that it's not easy writing a monthly column for this magazine. In the past, my written efforts were mostly limited to term papers, letters to far away friends, and my own fanzine, which is an oft-hurried, cut and paste affair distributed mostly to friends and well-wishers. Even in those cases, though, I learned that writing really tests the will, at times more so than the imagination. Often, the process of turning a private thought into a public exhibit becomes an exercise in fighting my own embarrassment about the whole damn thing, and as often as not the tension doesn't resolve on the written page. It is less a fear of bad writing than it is anxiety about revealing something best left unsaid, stirring something most comfortably left dormant, or documenting something best left off the record This is why I am always a little envious of those friends of mine who have confessed to me that they like to read and reread their own zines, and who do so with enthusiasm, and without any apparent second-guessing.

Mike, Michelle, and I were on the topic of writing as I made dinner for myself last night. We got started when I brought up Nick Nolte's celebrity web-journal, a great recent discovery of mine. As I stirred my pasta sauce, we chuckled at Nolte's absurd writing, which is full of references to a man-servant (Manolo) performing tasks of stupendous idiocy on Nolte's behalf, living in the "'Bu" (as in Malibu), and too-numerous-to-list head-scratching moves on the part of Nolte himself What started as a hearty laugh among friends at an out-of-touch celebrity's expense, however, somehow twisted its way into a conversation about the writer as performer, and the idea that in order to be a good writer a person has to manage to step away from their life for a while, and wholly inhabit the work that they're doing. How else could you write stories about your friends, enemies, parents, or lovers without fear of judgment or reprisal? The easy joke for you to make is to mock me for arriving at a too-dramatic point about all this by way of a possibly fake and unquestionably ridiculous celebrity blog, but I already made the joke and you get my point, anyway.

After reading one of my columns, my friend Ben told me that I sounded "too emo," as he went on to admit that his favorite part of that same column was when I get kicked in the shins by an eccentric in the park. This just goes to show that if you're out of ideas—much the same as in life—you can always just set yourself up as the punch line to take a little pressure off.

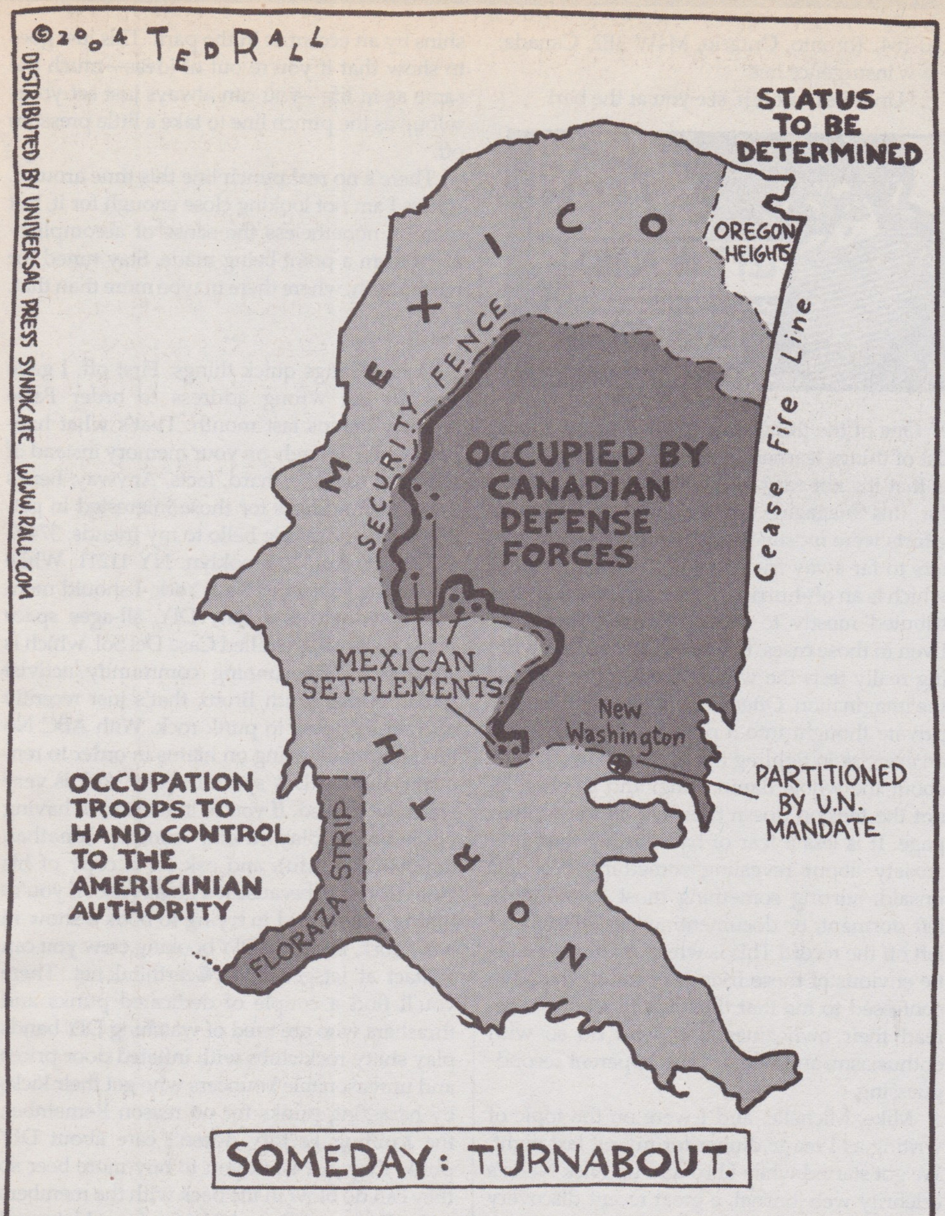
There's no real punch line this time around, unless I am not looking close enough for it, but there is nonetheless the sense of accomplishment from a point being made. Stay tuned for next month, where there maybe more than that, even.

***

A few things quick things. First off, I gave you all the wrong address to order False Security demos last month. That's what happens when you rely on your memory instead of checking the cold, hard, facts. Anyway, here's the correct address for those interested in getting a tape or saying hello to my friends: 374 S. 5th Street, Apt. 2, Brooklyn, NY 11211. While I'm on the subject of New York, I should mention that there is a new DIY, all-ages space doing shows there called Casa Del Sol, which is actually a long running community/activist center in the South Bronx that's just recently opened its doors to punk rock. With ABC No Rio potentially going on hiatus in order to renovate, another DIY space in New York is very welcome indeed. If you're interested in having your band play there, contact Jonathan (jms390@nyu.edu), and ask for a copy of his zine *Abort* too, because it's great. Also, if you're hitting a dead end in trying to book a show in New York, there is a DIY booking crew you can contact at letsgetridofny@earthlink.net. There you'll find a couple of dedicated punks and thrashers who are tired of watching DIY bands play shitty rock clubs with inflated door prices and unreasonable bouncers who get their kicks by harassing punks for no reason Remember, the Knitting Factory doesn't care about DIY punk, they just want you to buy more beer so they can do blow in the back with the members of Le Tigre and their A&R rep from Universal records. The point I'm trying to make, punk rocker, is this: Don't stop being proud of punk, and above all, keep it DIY.

If you haven't done so yet at Mitch's behest, you should do a great personal favor to me (and yourself) and pick up the reissue of the CHIEFS EP, entitled *Blues*. It seems that every month more excellent early punk from Los Angeles gets a classy reissue, and this record is no exception. A steady diet of Dangerhouse reissues and now this CHIEFS record has left me smiling stoopidly into oblivion, indeed. Hopefully the world will see reissues of the BRAT 10" and the BAGS EP someday soon as well.

As always, I welcome comments, concerns, stories, gossip, cash/rare record offers, or simple "hellos" via my email: golnar@maximumrocknroll.com. So far, only one person has written to me. C'mon now, I am not even asking for real mail yet, as the cursed post office has still not complied with my request for a PO Box. I know that the message boards are eating away at your time, but ya'll should be able to do better than that.



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SOPHIE—09/19/2K4—NYC

I MET SOPHIE AT THE MOCCA (MUSEUM OF COMIC & CARTOON ART) FEST IN NYC—SHE ASKED ME TO TRADE COMICS WITH HER & FIRST I WASNT SURE CUZ I DONT USUALLY DO TRADES CUZ I CAN'T AFFORD TO BUT THEN I LOOKED AT HER COMIC & IT WAS SO INCREDIBLE—ITS CALLED "BELLYBUTTON COMICS" & ITS PUBLISHED BY FANTAGRAPHICS SO YOU CAN PROBLY GET IT IN YR LOCAL COMIC STORE—ASK FOR IT! HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!! SOPHIE IS REALLY TALENTED & IS CURRENTLY LEARNING TO TATTOO—APPRENTICING WITH THE ALSO TALENTED ADAM SUERTE—IN HER SPARE TIME SOPHIE CAN BE FOUND WEARING HER CADDY BLING & DRINKING BEER IN TOMPKINS SQUARE PARK WITH THE TRUE PUNKS—IF YOU WANT TO CONTACT SOPHIE YOU CAN EMAIL ME & I WILL FORWARD IT TO HER—PUT MRR IN THE SUBJECT SO I KNOW ITS NOT SPAM—THNKS MY EMAIL IS—FLY@BWAY.NET - WEBSITE IS—WWW.BWAY.NET/~FLY—SNAIL MAIL IS—FLY PO BOX 1318 COOPER STN NYC NY10276

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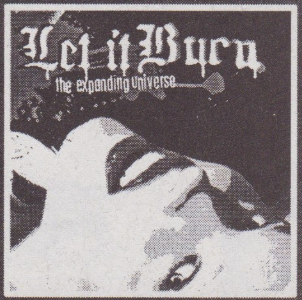

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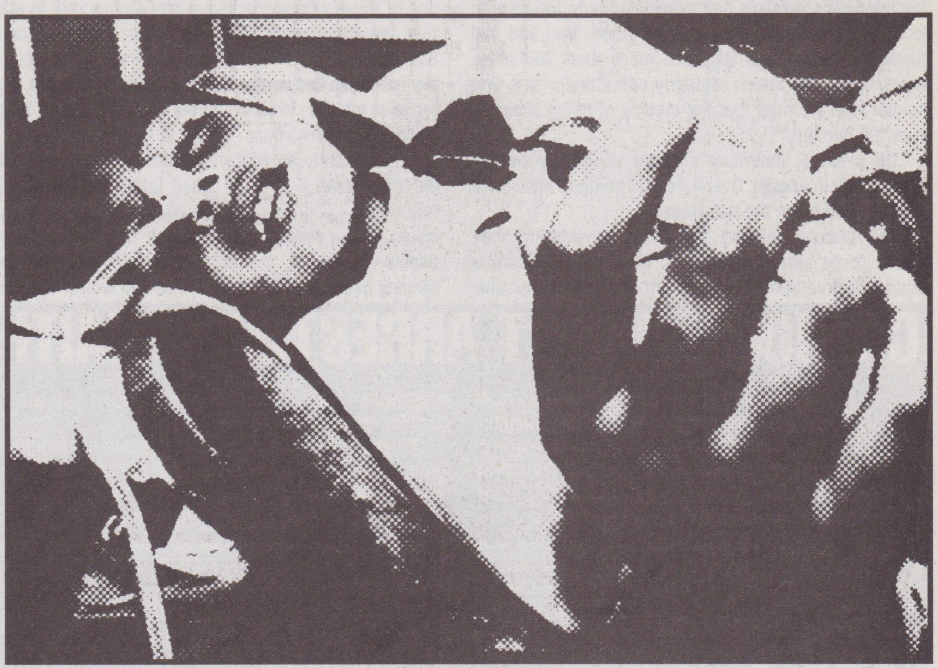
MRR NEWS FOR ISSUE #259 COMPILED BY GOLNAR NIKPOUR & ANANDI

COUNTING THE CIVILIAN COST IN IRAQ



from an article by Matthew Davis, BBC News

More than 1,000 US soldiers have been killed since the invasion of Iraq in March 2003. Other coalition allies are mourning dozens of their own fighting men and women.

Thousands of Iraqi civilians have also died as a result of conflict and its bloody aftermath—but officially, no one has any idea how many. Human rights groups say the occupying powers have failed in a duty to catalogue the deaths, giving the impression that ordinary Iraqis' lives are worth less than those of soldiers.

Unofficial estimates of the civilian toll vary wildly, from at least 10,000 to more than 37,000.

But the view famously expressed by US General Tommy Franks that "we don't do body counts" still resonates in government circles.

America and Britain say the chaos of war-torn Iraq makes it impossible to get accurate information.

And while Iraq's health and interior ministries now record non-military deaths, resources for this are tiny in a country rebuilding after war.

The UK-based Iraq Body Count—run on a shoestring by about 20 academics and peace activists—is one of the most widely-quoted sources of information on the civilian toll.

It says 13-15,000 ordinary Iraqis have died since the invasion in March 2003, figures compiled from media reports of thousands of incidents.

Some other organization's estimated death tolls are as follows: Brookings Inst: 10-27,000, UK foreign secretary: >10,000, People's Kifah > 37,000

Where sources report differing figures, a minimum and a maximum are given.

Professor John Sloboda, a co-founder of Iraq Body Count, told BBC News Online: "Everyone can agree that there are good reasons why our count can never be complete, but there is not as much confusion as you think.

"Since the end of hostilities was declared, we are confident in the figures."

The IBC wants to see an independent commission set up in Iraq to give the best estimate of civilian deaths and full details of how each person died.

Prof Sloboda said: "No country could hold its head up high without looking back to investigate the deaths of thousands of its people.

"Imagine the United States not investigating exactly who died on September 11, it is unthinkable."

It should be recognized that there is no reliable way of estimating the number of civilian casualties caused during major combat operations

Other sources for casualty figures include the Washington-based Brookings Institution, which combines IBC's figures with projections for deaths caused by violent crime in Iraq.

It says that from May 2003 to the end of August 2004, between 10,000 and 27,000 Iraqis were killed through acts of war or other violence. I n August, an Iraqi group calling itself the People's Kifah said it had documented more than 37,000 civilian deaths from March to October 2003. There has been no independent scrutiny of these figures, and the group could not be contacted.

The Pentagon, like the UK MoD, claims US forces do all they can to minimize civilian casualties in one of the "most precisely targeted campaigns" in history, but it has said it does not produce figures on those killed.

The US State Department told BBC News Online it had no policy input on the issue, which was "entirely a matter for the Defense Department".

An MoD spokesman said: "It should be recognized that there is no reliable way of estimating the number of civilian casualties caused during major combat operations.

But in May, UK Foreign Secretary Jack Straw told BBC radio that estimates by non-governmental organizations put the civilian death toll at about 10,000 in the year after the invasion. He said it was "odd that coalition forces have not kept consistent records." The Foreign Office now says 10,000 was never an official figure, and doubts one will ever be obtained.

Critics point to the fact that neither the British nor US forces have any difficulty in announcing they have killed a fairly exact number of "enemy" or "insurgents."

And some legal experts say it is the duty of occupying powers to keep track of civilian losses under the Geneva Conventions.

But in many incidents it is hard to get a true picture of what caused the attack, let alone how many people were killed.

Ken Roth, head of Human Rights Watch, told BBC News Online he doesn't think it will ever be possible to come up with anything better than a good guess at the final civilian cost.

"It's not like Yugoslavia where the Serbs kept detailed records of the civilian toll. In Iraq, the institutions that could have compiled them have broken down.

"In the chaos of Iraq, people die, they are quickly buried and nothing more may be heard of them. Fighters dress in street clothes, so in hospitals they are indistinguishable from civilians."

Producing a final toll can be useful in that we can weigh the cost of war against the number of innocent lives, Mr Roth said.

"But what is more important is what lessons can be learned by investigating how and why people were killed."

Human Rights Watch says the invasion of Iraq saw a dramatic fall in the number of US Air Force strikes using cluster bombs in populated areas—a consequence of lessons learned in Afghanistan.

But it says the US Army—which had not fought a major war for 10 years—continued to use the controversial bombs in abundance.

A recent HRW report also criticized what it said was the "imprecise targeting" of decapitation strikes against figures in Saddam Hussein's regime.

Out of 50 strikes, none were hit, says HRW, but 40 civilians were killed because planners relied on rough Global Positioning System locations from mobile phones.

"Any attacking force has a duty to do this kind of analysis," said Mr Roth. "What is amazing is that the US does nothing of the sort."

In the meantime, Iraq's precarious security situation sees dozens of people killed every day.

"Nobody can stop themselves being drawn into the blind violence that continues to sweep the country," said Nada Doumani, of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

"Civilians are those who pay the greatest price."

ARMY DETAINS US RESERVISTS WHO REFUSE TO CARRY OUT "SUICIDE MISSION" IN IRAQ

from democracynow.org

Nineteen members of a US Army Reserve platoon were placed under arrest for refusing to obey orders to go on what they considered a "suicide mission."

Stationed at Tallil Air Base south of Nasiriyah, members of the 343rd Quartermaster Company were ordered to drive a fuel supply convoy up to Taji, north of Baghdad. The soldiers had previously only focused on local missions in safer parts of southern Iraq and had never driven through Baghdad more than 200 miles away, where US forces regularly come under fire. One soldier later claimed that the chance of being attacked was "99 percent."

On average, American soldiers were attacked 87 times a day in August. Over 1,100 US soldiers have been killed in Iraq since the war began.

The platoon refused the order, considering their trucks to be extremely unsafe. They said the convoy tankers lacked bullet-resistant armor and were not able to travel faster than 40 miles an hour. Some of the supply trucks were in disrepair and prone to breakdown. And while the armed escort of Humvees and helicopters normally provided, was not available. One the soldiers later described the mission as a "death sentence."

The platoon's commanding general, Brig. Gen. James Chambers, admitted yesterday that the unit was one of those whose trucks are still unarmored. In addition, the *Washington Post* reports that Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, the top US commander in Iraq, complained to the Pentagon last winter that the lack of key spare parts for gear vital to combat operations was so poor that it threatened Army troops "ability to fight."

In addition to the high-risk nature of the mission, the objective itself has been called into question. The jet fuel that the platoon was ordered to transport may have been contaminated with diesel and wasn't even usable—Some of the soldiers "claim the fuel had already been rejected by one base and would be rejected again at Taji."

After refusing the orders, the US Army placed the men and women of the platoon under arrest. They were corralled in a tent and detained at gunpoint for nearly two days. During this time, some of them managed to phone their relatives back home. In Alabama, Teresa Hill woke up to hear a recorded message on her answering machine from her daughter, Spc. Amber McClenny. On the tape McClenny says, "I need you now, Mom. I need you so bad...please help me. They are holding us against our will. We are now prisoners."

According to the father of one of the soldiers, five members of the platoon were told they would be punished with a general discharge. Chambers said all eighteen soldiers have returned to duty. The Army has begun an inquiry, and the soldiers could face disciplinary measures, including possible court martial.

CATHOLIC PRIEST ARRESTED IN HAITI

From *Institute For Justice And Democracy In Haiti* Bulletin

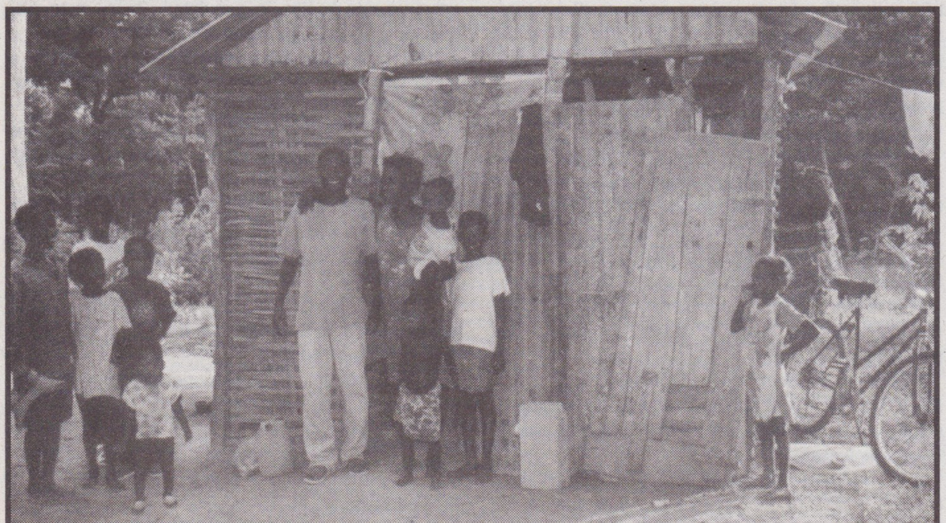
On Wednesday, October 13, 2004, Haitian police forcibly entered the Sainte Claire Catholic Church in Port-au-Prince and arrested the Pastor, Rev. Gérard Jean-Juste, without a warrant, while he was feeding the hungry children of his parish. Fr. Jean-Juste is a prominent activist for peace, justice, and the rights of immigrants in Haiti and the US. There are also reports of arrests of two other priests, Rev. Francois and Rev. Sauvagere, as well as raids on three additional churches.

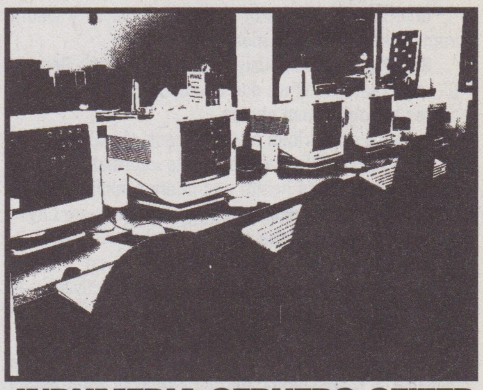
The Sainte Claire Church is located in Petite Place Cazeau, a poor neighborhood of Delmas, a Port-au-Prince suburb. On Wednesdays, Fr. Jean-Juste runs a soup kitchen that gives many area residents, especially children, their only meal of the day. During the feeding program, heavily armed men surrounded the church and announced their intention to arrest Fr. Jean-Juste. Some wore uniforms of the Haitian National Police (HNP), some wore no uniforms, and many wore masks. The police refused to produce a warrant, and when asked what the charge was, replied that the priest "was a threat to public order." Later, interim Prime Minister Gérard Latortue told journalists there was a warrant, but could not say what the charge was.

When Fr. Jean-Juste refused to leave his feeding program, the police raided the church and dragged him out of the rectory. Witnesses reported that the police punched the priest, and Fr. Jean-Juste reported an injury to his foot. He was transported to a police station holding cell, where he is now being held incommunicado.

Interim Prime Minister Latortue claimed he had intelligence that Fr. Jean-Juste associated with people who were planning to commit violence against the government later this week, and that the Ste. Claire raid was a pre-emptive strike.

The illegal arrest continues a month-long wave of systematic attacks against civil society institutions, including labor unions, radio stations, lawyers and members of Parliament, as well as lethal police raids in poor neighborhoods. It is particularly troubling that the persecution extended to Fr. Jean-Juste, one of Haiti's most persistent and influential voices for peace over the last two decades. The arrest shows a brazenness and disregard of Haitian and International law not seen since the Duvalier dictatorships.





INDYMEDIA SERVERS SEIZED IN BRITAIN SHUTTING DOWN 20 WEBSITES

democracynow.org

Earlier this month, two United Kingdom based internet servers containing data for more than twenty local Independent Media Center websites were seized A week later, the webservers were returned to Indymedia and their hosting company, Rackspace Managed Hosting.

It is still unclear who actually took the servers, the reasons for the seizure, or the legal authority under which they were impounded. Citing a gag order, Rackspace would not comment on what had happened both in the original seizure of the servers or their return.

What is known at this point is that the subpoena that resulted in the seizure was issued at the request of a foreign government. Although initial reports suggested that the FBI had taken the servers, the FBI has now denied any involvement.

Indymedia and the Electronic Frontier Foundation are planning legal action to find out what really happened to Indymedia's servers.

The seizure has come under heavy criticism from civil liberties and press freedom groups. Aidan White, General Secretary of the International Federation of Journalists, called it "an intolerable and intrusive international police operation against a network specializing in independent journalism ... [that] smacks more of intimidation of legitimate journalistic inquiry than crime-busting."

AIR FORCE PURSUING ANTIMATTER WEAPONS PROGRAM WAS TOUTED PUBLICLY, THEN CAME OFFICIAL GAG ORDER.

from an article by Keay Davidson, Chronicle Science *Writer*

The US Air Force is quietly spending millions of dollars investigating ways to use a radical power source—antimatter, the eerie "mirror" of ordinary matter—in future weapons.

The most powerful potential energy source presently thought to be available to humanity, "antimatter" is a term normally heard in science-fiction films and TV shows whose heroes fly "antimatter-powered spaceships" and do battle with "antimatter guns."

But antimatter itself isn't fiction. It actually exists and has been intensively studied by physicists since the 1930s. In a sense, matter and antimatter are the yin and yang of reality: Every type of subatomic particle has its antimatter counterpart. But when matter and antimatter collide, they annihilate each other in an immense burst of energy.

During the Cold War, the Air Force funded numerous scientific studies of the basic physics of antimatter. With the knowledge gained, some Air Force insiders are beginning to think seriously about potential military uses—for example, antimatter bombs small enough to hold in one's hand, and antimatter engines for 24/7 surveillance aircraft.

More cataclysmic possible uses include a new generation of super weapons—either pure antimatter bombs or antimatter-triggered nuclear weapons; the former wouldn't emit radioactive fallout. Another possibility is antimatter-powered "electromagnetic pulse" weapons that could fry an enemy's electric power grid and communications networks, leaving him literally in the dark and unable to operate his society and armed forces.

Following an initial inquiry from *The Chronicle* this summer, the Air Force forbade its employees from publicly discussing the antimatter research program. Still, details on the program appear in numerous Air Force documents distributed over the internet prior to the ban.

These include an outline of a March 2004 speech by an Air Force official who, in effect, spilled the beans about the Air Force's high hopes for antimatter weapons. On March 24, Kenneth Edwards, director of the "revolutionary munitions" team at the Munitions Directorate at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida was keynote speaker at the NASA Institute for Advanced Concepts (NIAC) conference in Arlington, Va.

If electrons or protons collide with their antimatter counterparts, they annihilate each other. In so doing, they unleash more energy than any other known energy source, even thermonuclear bombs.

The energy from colliding positrons and anti-electrons, "is ten billion times that of high explosives," Edwards explained in his March speech. Moreover, one gram of antimatter, about 1/25th of an ounce, would equal "23 space shuttle fuel tanks of energy." Thus "positron energy conversion," as he called it, would be a "revolutionary energy source" of interest to those who wage war.

Unlike regular nuclear bombs, positron bombs wouldn't eject plumes of radioactive debris. When large numbers of positrons and anti-electrons collide, the primary product is an invisible but extremely dangerous burst of gamma radiation. Thus, in principle, a positron bomb could be a step toward one of the military's dreams from the early Cold War: a so-called "clean" super bomb that could kill large numbers of soldiers without ejecting radioactive contaminants over the countryside.

But talk of "clean" super bombs worries critics. " 'Clean' nuclear weapons are more dangerous than dirty ones because they are more likely to be used," said an email from science historian George Dyson of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, NJ.

Edwards' point man in that effort is Gerald Smith, former chairman of physics and Antimatter Project leader at Pennsylvania State University. Smith now operates a small firm, Positronics Research LLC, in Santa Fe, NM. So far, the Air Force has given Smith and his colleagues $3.7 million for positron research, Smith told *The Chronicle* in August.

GLOBAL WARMING FEARS RISE WITH CARBON DIOXIDE INCREASE

from Melbourne Indymedia

A US climate scientist, Charles Keeling, has reported that for the first time, carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere rose by more than two parts per million for two years running, from 2000 to 2001. He continued, "The rise in the annual rate to above two parts per million for two consecutive years is a real phenomenon."

"It is possible that this is merely a reflection of natural events like previous peaks in the rate, but it is also possible that it is the beginning of a natural process unprecedented in the record."

The levels were measured on top of Mauna Loa in Hawaii. Between 2001 and 2002 the number of parts per million of carbon dioxide rose from 371.02 to 373.10, an increase of 2.08 over the year. Then it rose again in 2003 to 375.64, an annual increase of 2.54.

Such increases in the past have been associated with the El Nino phenomenon that periodically disrupts weather patterns in the Pacific Basin. But El Nino has not occurred to match these recent increases.

Mr Keeling said one explanation for the rise "could be a weakening of the earth's carbon 'sinks' [oceans and forests], associated with the world warming, as part of a climate change feedback mechanism."

Peter Cox, who heads the carbon cycle group at Britain's Hadley Centre for Climate Prediction and Research, was more skeptical saying it was possible to read too much into the figures. He also pointed out that the increase in carbon dioxide was not uniform across the globe and suspected something unusual had happened in the Northern Hemisphere. He proposed that the very hot summer last year in Europe, and more forest fires may have killed off vegetation thus increasing carbon releases from the soil.(1)

Dr Piers Forster, senior research fellow of the University of Reading's Department of Meteorology, said: "If this is a rate change, of course it will be very significant. It will be of enormous concern, because it will imply that all our global warming predictions for the next hundred years or so will have to be redone." (2)

ABC London correspondent, Kirsten Aiken, interviewed Chris Jones from the UK's Hadley Centre for Climate Change for ABC Radio - AM program:

"What we think is happening is that the natural vegetation, the forests and so on, which normally absorb a certain amount of the fossil fuel emissions, have started to absorb less of that as a response to the 2003 very warm summer." said Chris Jones.

He further elaborated to Kirsten Aiken what it meant: "Well, on its own all it shows is that the natural carbon cycle has a sensitivity to climate, but the wider implication is that in the future if these warmer summers become the norm, which is what we expect in terms of global warming scenarios, then we may see a feedback where the changes in climate cause a long-term increase in carbon dioxide on top of the fossil fuel emissions, and that in itself could increase the warming in a sort of positive feedback."

Kirsten Aiken also spoke to Dr Craig Wallace from the Tyndall Centre for Climate Research. He provided a sobering warning that the increase could mean rapid climate change is already in progress.

"It could just be a temporary blip. If it's the start of a real trend then this potentially is very serious indeed. The time for halting climate change actually went and passed in the late 1980s. What we can do now is hopefully slow down climate change, mitigate climate change by following the precedent set by the Kyoto Climate Agreement." he said.

UK Director of Greenpeace, Stephen Tindall, hoped news of the increase in CO2 levels will provide the impetus for governments to tackle climate change. He singled out Australia for special mention, describing it as one of the world's biggest carbon dioxide polluters which has failed to make any real moves to address what is shaping up as the globe's greatest threat.

"We can see that politicians are slowly beginning to move, not nearly fast enough of course, but at least there is some movement. So in recent weeks we've seen Kyoto being ratified by the Russians, which means that it will finally come into force."

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US APPEALS WTO RULING ON COTTON SUBSIDIES

The United States said it is appealing a World Trade Organization (WTO) ruling that declared the bulk of US government subsidies to its cotton industry illegal.

from an article by Emad Mekay, Interpress Service News Agency

The United States said it is appealing a World Trade Organization (WTO) ruling that declared the bulk of US government subsidies to its cotton industry illegal.

The move calls into question the Bush administration's commitment to abide by the rules of the global trade arbitrator and its frequent urgings to developing countries to do the same.

The WTO ruled in September in a dispute brought by Brazil, backed by other developing nations, which challenged several types of US agricultural support measures, including financial backing for cotton farmers. Brazil alleged that subsidies paid to US farmers growing cotton from 1999 to 2002, and others mandated through 2007 in the latest US farm bill, violate WTO rules.

The WTO panel found that 3.2 billion dollars worth of US annual cotton subsidies and 1.6 billion dollars in export credits for cotton and other commodities contravene WTO rules.

The case aroused world interest, as it was seen as the first dispute involving the massive agricultural subsidies paid by rich nations to their producers, which critics say overwhelm farm exports from the Third World. Since the WTO ministerial conference in Cancun in 2003, cotton has been a major item on the WTO negotiation agenda.

In West Africa alone, ten million people depend on cotton for their livelihoods. The US share of world cotton exports is expected to reach 42 percent this year—its highest since 1960 and an increase from 24 percent of the global market in 1996.

Critics claim that subsidies spur US agricultural production, flooding the world market with goods and driving down prices. Washington counters that the payments have only minimal effects and denies that all US support payments, including export credit guarantees for some agricultural commodities, distort production and trade.

"We strongly disagree with some aspects of the panel report, which we will be appealing," said US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick on Monday.

"The facts do not show that US farm programs have distorted trade and caused low cotton prices. Moreover, some aspects of the panel report belong in negotiation and not litigation, namely in the Doha Development Agenda negotiations (as the current round of WTO negotiations is called)."

He added that the appeal process is lengthy, so there will be no immediate impact from the WTO ruling, especially to US farm programs.

But the international development group Oxfam said in a report released Monday that US subsidies encourage overproduction and promote the dumping of excess cotton overseas, undermining the livelihoods of poor farmers in the developing world. Dumping is the practice of exporting at below the cost of production.

The report *Finding The Moral Fibre: Why Reform is Urgently Needed for a Fair Cotton Trade* urges Washington to reform its farm schemes and stop dumping.

Fair trade activists say the appeal shows that Washington is not committed to the world trade system it tries to impose on other nations. "The case against US cotton dumping is plain and overwhelming and confirmed by the WTO. The US was part of a world-wide commitment in July to make "ambitious" reforms of cotton subsidies—and this appeal flies in the face of this commitment," Charveriat said.

Oxfam says the United States needs to follow the rules since it uses them in its own challenges. Washington has always publicly maintained that multilateral commitments to reduce tariffs and subsidies will increase the role of market forces globally and is the "only way to address core (trade) issues."

"The US uses the dispute settlement mechanism more than any other WTO member. Not only does the US have a moral obligation to stop dumping cotton, but it is also in its own interest to follow the WTO's findings," Charveriat said.

Oxfam estimates that US dumping created losses of almost 400 million dollars for poor cotton-producing African countries between 2001 and 2003.

POLICE IN RIOT GEAR FIRE ON CROWD WITH BALLS LOADED WITH PEPPER

by Jeff Barnard, Associated Press

Police in riot gear fired paintballs filled with cayenne pepper to disperse a crowd of protesters in Jacksonville, Oregon assembled in this historic gold mining town where George W. Bush was spending the night after a campaign appearance.

Police began moving the crowd away from the Jacksonville Inn, where Bush was to arrive for a dinner and to spend the night following his speech.

"Nobody was being violent," said Cerridewen Bunten, 24, a college student and retail clerk from Ashland. "We were out of the streets so cars could go by. We were being loud, but I never knew that was against the law."

Bunten said she was pushed by police as she held her six-year-old daughter.

Jeff Treadwell, 37, an auto mechanic from Medford who joined the protesters, estimated that about 500 people were assembled.

Jacksonville City Administrator Paul Wyntergreen said the protest was peaceful until a few people started pushing police. Police reacted by firing pepper balls, which he described as projectiles like a paintball filled with cayenne pepper. Two people were arrested for failing to disperse.

Richard Swaney, 65, of Central Point, said had joined in a peaceful protest outside the Jackson County fairgrounds and then went to Jacksonville to join the protest there.

He said he was walking with the crowd away from the inn when he was hit in the back with three separate bursts, one of which knocked him down. He felt a stinging sensation he thought was rubber bullets and smelled pepper.

"I don't think I moved fast enough," said Swaney. "I can't believe this happens in the United States. It was very peaceful. I think this is the way tyranny begins."

Wyntergreen said no rubber bullets were fired, only pepper balls.

CANDIDATE POISONED IN UKRAINE?

From an article in BBC News online

A Ukrainian opposition leader and presidential candidate is recovering in hospital in Vienna after an alleged attempt to poison him. Viktor Yushchenko arrived in the Austrian capital a week ago after falling ill with what was thought at the time to be food poisoning. But doctors found "chemical substances" inside the candidate, an aide said.

A presidential aide made light of the allegation, suggesting the candidate should have drunk vodka as a cure.

Giving details of the alleged poisoning on Friday, campaign manager Oleksander Zinchenko said there was "enough evidence to say that it was an attempt on [Mr. Yushchenko's] life."

Austrian doctors were quoted as saying their patient's illness was due to both a serious viral infection and "chemical substances which are not normally found in food products."

In August, an attempt was allegedly made to force the candidate's car off a road as he campaigned in Ukraine.

Mr. Yushchenko's campaign team said they had been expecting the authorities to resort to "strong-arm techniques" to ensure the victory of Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich—the candidate favored by the outgoing Ukrainian President, Leonid Kuchma.

"A month before their ouster, the authorities are ready to launch any kind of attacks to ensure their survival, including the elimination of competitors," the team said in a statement.

The deputy head of the Ukrainian presidential administration denied any wrongdoing.

PHIL SPECTOR IS FREE ON $1 MILLION BAIL

from BBC News

Music producer Phil Spector has been granted a court delay to give his new legal team time to prepare his defense against a murder charge. Spector, 64, denies murdering B-movie actress and club hostess Lana Clarkson at his home in February 2003.

A spokesman for the prosecutor's office said delays in high-profile cases were to be expected. "The district attorney is used to having cases like this move like a herd of turtles," district attorney spokesman Sandi Gibbons said.

Mr. Spector's recently appointed lawyer Bruce Cutler said he was confident of clearing his client' s name. "This case never should have been brought." Mr. Cutler said.

Punk rockers will remember Phil Spector as the mad genius who produced the Ramones fourth album, *End of the Century.*

DISSENT AT THE WAR MEMORIAL

by Howard Zinn
Published in the August, 2004 issue of The Progressive

As I write this, the sounds of the World War II Memorial celebration in Washington, D.C., are still in my head. I was invited by the Smithsonian Institution to be on one of the panels, and the person who called to invite me said that the theme would be "War Stories." I told him that I would come, but not to tell "war stories," rather to talk about World War II and its meaning for us today. Fine, he said.

I made my way into a scene that looked like a movie set for a Cecil B. DeMille extravaganza—huge tents pitched here and there, hawkers with souvenirs, thousands of visitors, many of them clearly World War II veterans, some in old uniforms, sporting military caps, wearing their medals. In the tent designated for my panel, I joined my fellow panelist, an African American woman who had served with the WACS (Women's Army Corps) in World War II, and who would speak about her personal experiences in a racially segregated army.

I was introduced as a veteran of the Army Air Corps, a bombardier who had flown combat missions over Europe in the last months of the war. I wasn't sure how this audience would react to what I had to say about the war, in that atmosphere of celebration, in the honoring of the dead, in the glow of a great victory accompanied by countless acts of military heroism.

This, roughly, is what I said: "I'm here to honor the two guys who were my closest buddies in the Air Corps—Joe Perry and Ed Plotkin, both of whom were killed in the last weeks of the war. And to honor all the others who died in that war. But I'm not here to honor war itself. I'm not here to honor the men in Washington who send the young to war. I'm certainly not here to honor those in authority who are now waging an immoral war in Iraq."

I went on: "World War II is not simply and purely a 'good war.' It was accompanied by too many atrocities on our side—too many bombings of civilian populations. There were too many betrayals of the principles for which the war was supposed to have been fought.

"Yes, World War II had a strong moral aspect to it—the defeat of fascism. But I deeply resent the way the so-called good war has been used to cast its glow over all the immoral wars we have fought in the past fifty years: in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Grenada, Panama, Iraq, Afghanistan. I certainly don't want our government to use the triumphal excitement surrounding World War II to cover up the horrors now taking place in Iraq.

"I don't want to honor military heroism—that conceals too much death and suffering. I want to honor those who all these years have opposed the horror of war."

The audience applauded. But I wasn't sure what that meant. I knew I was going against the grain of orthodoxy, the romanticization of the war in movies and television and now in the war memorial celebrations in the nation's capital.

There was a question-and-answer period. The first person to walk up front was a veteran of World War II, wearing parts of his old uniform. He spoke into the microphone: "I was wounded in World War II and have a Purple Heart to show for it. If President Bush were here right now I would throw that medal in his face."

There was a moment of what I think was shock at the force of his statement. Then applause. I wondered if I was seeing a phenomenon that recurs often in society—when one voice speaks out against the conventional wisdom, and is recognized as speaking truth, people are drawn out of their previous silence.

I was encouraged by the thought that it is possible to challenge the standard glorification of the Second World War, and more important, to refuse to allow it to give war a good name. I did not want this celebration to make it easy for the American public to accept whatever monstrous adventure is cooked up by the establishment in Washington.

More and more, I am finding that I am not the only veteran of World War II who refuses to be corralled into justifying the wars of today, drawing on the emotional and moral capital of World War II. There are other veterans who do not want to overlook the moral complexity of World War II: the imperial intentions of the Allies even as they declared it a war against fascism, and for democracy; the deliberate bombing of civilian populations to destroy the morale of the enemy.

Paul Fussell was an infantry lieutenant who was badly wounded while a platoon leader in France in World War II.

"For the past fifty years the Allied war has been sanitized and romanticized almost beyond recognition by the sentimental, the loony patriotic, the ignorant, and the bloodthirsty," he wrote in Wartime.

It was easier, after the end of World War II, to point to its stupidities and cruelties in fiction rather than in a direct onslaught on what was so universally acclaimed as "the good war." Thus, Joseph Heller in Catch-22 captured the idiocy of military life, the crass profiteering, the pointless bombings. And Kurt Vonnegut, in Slaughterhouse-Five, brought to a large readership the awful story of the bombing of Dresden.

My own delayed criticism of the war—I had volunteered and was an enthusiastic bombardier—began with reflecting about my participation in the bombing of Royan. This was a small town on the Atlantic coast of France, where several thousand German soldiers had been overrun and were waiting for the war to end. Twelve hundred heavy bombers flew over the vicinity of Royan and dropped napalm, killing German soldiers and French civilians, destroying what was once a beautiful little resort town.

Recently, a man wrote to me who had heard me speak on the radio about that bombing mission and said he was also on that mission. After the war, he became a fireman, then a carpenter, and is now a strong opponent of war. He told me of a friend of his who was also on that mission, and who has been arrested many times in anti-war actions. I was encouraged to hear that.

World War II veterans get in touch with me from time to time. One is Edward Wood Jr. of Denver, who upon hearing I was going to be at the Washington Memorial, wrote to me: He said, "If I were there, I would say: As a combat veteran of World War II, severely wounded in France in 1944, never the man I might have been because of that wound, I so wish that this memorial to World War II might have been made of more than stone or marble. I mourn my generation's failures since its victory in World War II . . . our legacy of incessant warfare in smaller nations far from our borders."

Another airman, Ken Norwood, was shot down on his tenth mission over Europe, and spent a year as a prisoner of war in Germany. He has written a memoir (unpublished, so far) which he says is "intentionally an anti-war war story." Packed first into a box car, and then forced to march for two weeks through Bavaria in the spring of 1945, Norwood saw the mangled corpses of the victims of Allied bombs, the working class neighborhoods destroyed. All his experiences, he says, "add to the harsh testimony about the futility and obscenity of war."

The glorification of the "good war" persists on our television and movie screens, in the press, in the pretentious speeches by politicians. The more ugly the stories that come out of Iraq—the bombing of civilians, the mutilation of children, the invasion of homes, and now the torture of prisoners—the more urgent it is for our government to try to crowd out all those images with the triumphant stories of D-Day and World War II.

Those who fought in that war are perhaps better able than anyone to insist that whatever moral standing can be attached to that war must not be used to turn our eyes away from Bush's atrocities in Afghanistan and Iraq.

UN TO INVESTIGATE AFGHAN ELECTION

from BBC news

The United Nations is to investigate alleged irregularities in Afghanistan's presidential election.

One of President Karzai's main rivals, Yunus Qanuni, has vowed to accept the inquiry findings. Speaking after talks with US and UN envoys, Mr Qanuni said, "To respect the will of millions of Afghans and to go along with our national interests I would accept the results of the election after the investigation."

"I want to prove to the people of Afghanistan that the national interest is my highest interest," said Qanuni

He said he wanted the inquiry report published before the election results were announced.

Meanwhile, ballot boxes from the election have been pouring into counting centres across the country.

Afghanistan's Joint Electoral Management Body (JEMB) says ballot boxes in areas where complaints have been made will be separated from those from other areas.

Once they have been isolated, officials can start counting the rest of the votes.

The BBC's Crispin Thorold in Kabul says it may now take as long as three weeks for the full results to emerge.

A deadline for complaints may have delayed the count, but work is still being done by officials to ensure that the number of votes cast tallies with the number of people eligible to vote.

Fears that militants linked to the Taliban would sabotage the vote appear to have been largely unfounded. One person, however, was killed in a rocket attack in the capital, Kabul, on Monday. Correspondents say such attacks are common in Afghanistan, but rarely happen in the capital.

The three-member investigation panel will comprise a former Canadian diplomat, a Swedish election specialist and a third member to be named by the European Union.

They will examine all serious allegations of malpractice at the polls—not just complaints from many areas that indelible ink aimed at stopping multiple voting could be washed away.

News of the ink problems on Saturday was swiftly followed by a boycott call from all of the candidates opposing Mr Karzai, a Pashtun who has led the US-backed administration in Kabul since the overthrow of the Taliban three years ago.

Vote organizers and observers have rejected calls for a new poll, saying it was reasonably democratic.

More than 10 million people were registered to vote, many of them refugees living in Pakistan and Iran.

Across Afghanistan, there was a huge enthusiasm for the vote, BBC correspondents reported.

The Taliban, however, called the election foreign-sponsored and vowed to continue their armed struggle.

Mr Qanuni, an ethnic Tajik, is the latest candidate to soften his stance on the boycott issue and say he will abide by the findings of the independent inquiry.

Shia Hazara leader Mohammed Mohaqiq and lone female candidate Masooda Jalal had already said they wanted a UN inquiry.

President Karzai, the favorite, criticized calls for a fresh election as an affront to the hopes of the millions of Afghans who braved bad weather and the threat of terrorism to turn out to vote. And he was adamant there would be no back-room deals if he won the election — which he must do by a clear majority or face a run-off.

"If the Afghan people have voted for me—no horse-trading. The horse-trading times are over in Afghanistan," he told a news conference on Sunday.

IRAQ: THE MOST DIFFICULT JOURNEY

This story, written by Javier Couso Permuy of the band Sin Dios, originally appeared in La Clave magazine. It's about his trip to Iraq in April 2004, where he and two other members of the Jose Couso Siblings, Friends and Colleagues Collective went to pay homage to his brother Jose. It has been translated from its original Spanish.

I had been thinking about this trip for a long time. The need to end my mourning—what mental health experts call the period in which we come to terms with the disappearance of a loved one—was a circle that would close in Baghdad while I looked at my brother's window and to his assassins' faces. Without hiding. I had thought long and hard about the reason why I felt this need and concluded that paying homage to someone is inherent to our condition as sociable human beings. Maybe we can't change death itself (at least in a non-believer's point of view), but paying homage to someone we love will help alleviate our pain. It provides a sort of renaissance, an opportunity to leave the pain behind and face life again without forgetting those that are gone. I wanted them to know we haven't forgotten Jose or the justice he deserves. I knew the trip would be difficult. To retrace my brother's steps up to the place where he was assassinated hurt me before I even started.

The selected date of arrival couldn't have been worse. It was the first anniversary of the fall of Baghdad and there was fighting going on all over southern Iraq, the Stalingrad of Fallujah. In addition, the resistance had changed its strategy and had begun kidnapping. Also, Spanish troops debuted in cruel battles, undoing our inherited reputation as being sympathetic and neutral towards the Arab world in general and particularly towards Iraq.

Trouble began as soon as we arrived in Jordan, when personnel of the Spanish embassy told us that it was impossible to travel by road as the road between Amman and Baghdad had been blocked due to fighting in the eastern and southern part of the country. I should point out Spanish diplomats' attitude, as they were the first to show any interest in my family. Political considerations aside, I feel pleased by their attitude, as it is the complete opposite of the abandonment, neglect and antipathy with which Aznar's administration had treated my family. Even with such dark omens, we decide to take the road to Amman. We trusted our driver and all the people who had worked on the trip's logistics. The journey is long, but our big white car makes it very comfortable. During the beginning of our trip we feel a rush of different sensations that turns our stomachs into a blender of fatigue, nervousness, questions and determination. For a minute I realize that we are doing exactly what we were told not to do; we travel at night, right in the middle of heavy fighting and against the will of ambassadors and people we know…but we're going to make it. For you, Jose. In the middle of the long, never-ending straight road the moon showers the landscape, a sight that makes us feel relaxed. Our first stop is at a sort of small restaurant where taxi drivers, truckers and transporters eat and relax. I am shocked to see a newspaper clipping with my brother's photo on the wall. Jose was here for a few days before entering Iraq and these people remember him by paying homage this way. The place is run-down and a bit dirty, but all the sincere fondness shown for my brother makes it seem cleaner than any palace. We write this story following steps already taken. We continue our journey, sensing the border is getting nearer. The narrow two-way road goes straight ahead endlessly, causing one fright after another. The tracks left on the road tell us of the accidents that have happened here.

Passing the checkpoint at the border turns out to be easier than we had expected, passing the Iraqi side in less than five minutes. This is no small two-way road anymore. Before our eyes is a freeway that crosses across the desert and has three lanes at each side. It's also in pretty good shape. It's incredible to look at both sides of the freeway, the semi-darkness of the full moon makes us guess that everything down this infinite road is calm. There aren't any cars, any houses, any lights…we're like ghosts walking on the moon's surface. We feel tense, we're quiet, anxiously waiting. Fortunately, time and kilometers pass us by beating the excess of adrenaline and making us drowsy until we fall asleep. Halfway through our ride we stop because our driver doesn't want to drive through combat zones at night. We had a restless nap in a service area that was full of travelers and truckers who were just as uneasy and tired as we were.

About two hours later we were on the road again, just as the sun began to rise. We witnessed a radical change as the desert suddenly turned green. There was an oasis formed by the rivers. Houses appear out of nowhere and cars drive around all over. Our car stops suddenly. We are startled. We look in all directions until we see a U.S. convoy. All the cars are slowing down and turning to the sides of the road, driving slowly. I feel like we're in slow motion, very slow motion. The convoy is comprised of five or six semi-heavy vehicles. The soldiers look at us arrogantly while pointing their guns at us. They consider themselves masters of life and death. All we can do is swallow hard. We are passing through Fallujah on the day it is being controlled by the resistance and besieged by the marines. The road ends abruptly and we have no choice but to drive through small roads full of vehicles. We pass by small towns ending just outside of the great city of Baghdad. We're here. We have arrived.

I find myself before a very large city that shows us its wounds with each new step we take. I recognize some bridges, the river…all of a sudden there's the Palestine Hotel *(where Jose Couso was shot and killed by the US military, some say intentionally, while filming news footage from a balcony—ed)*, and yes, the sight of it hurts me! I thought I was already immune from the pain as I had seen this site a thousand times before. But no, it moves me. I think of Jose. Wednesday the 7th I wake up early feeling nervous. Today we will have the first act of homage. We will visit the Ibn Nafis Hospital where we'll meet the medical staff that tried to save my brother. As soon as we arrive a guard aims his AK-47 at us while another pats us down and takes away our cell phones. Ever since the plundering began the whole population is obsessed with security. The hospital is antiquated and ill equipped because of the war, but also because of years under an economic blockade. I see chaos, wounded and family members coming from the battles being waged today in Baghdad. In these times many of them don't look at us with friendly eyes. Who could blame them?

The homage is celebrated in a room where all the anesthesiologists, wardens and nurses that helped my brother are. I look at them and I know they did all they could. This is what I want them to know. Even though things are manipulated in the West, I know these are good professionals and that they are part of an educated and cultured people. I want them to know this. The director introduces me and thanks me for having traveled so far to meet with them. When my turn to speak comes I thank them for taking care of Jose, because during such a difficult moment for their country they didn't care about nationalities or the place where he came from. I name the team members one by one and give out the plaques. One for the director and another for doctor Faisal, chief physician. They tell me that the death of my brother affected them all and then every single one of them ends up with tears in their eyes. Another of Jose's miracles, to move those he didn't even know. We go outside to take a group photograph and they all wear the pin with Jose's face on it. Doctor Faisal tells me about how the physicians had to take arms to defend the hospital from the plundering going on. He shows me the hospital's deteriorated state, the lack of everything and asks himself "Is this the democracy of the Americans?"

Before leaving, I am introduced to the person who watched over Jose's body. He's an old man with skin wrinkled by the passing of time and has no teeth, but is absolutely kind. The translator tells me the man looked for ice, running around the city putting his life in danger to get some gasoline so the refrigerator wouldn't stop working. Because of his great efforts my mother and sister-in-law were able to see Jose one last time. Thank you once again. For the second act we met with the Occupation Observatory, a small citizen-based organization that keeps an eye on the effects of the occupation. It is presided by a fifty-something year old woman that speaks with an assertiveness that exudes strength and determination. As she speaks, a terrible situation develops for the Iraqi people. There's no security, no electric power, there are disappearances, tortures, and drawbacks in the situations faced by women…I sincerely appreciate what she's doing. To work in such perilous conditions and with a will to resist says a lot about the potential of these people. As we leave, reporters ask her if she was Sunni or Shiite. She firmly responds, "I'm an Iraqi."

We were offered a ride around Baghdad and we gladly accepted. It's a shame we can't walk, but seeing how things are here, it's better not to take any risks. As we drive around I begin putting together the puzzle of images of Baghdad I had seen in thousands of newspapers and newscasts. To see the effects of the bombings up close makes my hair stand.

Thursday, the 8th. Today is the act of homage in front of the Palestine Hotel. Before leaving, we prepare some posters with photos of Jose and the other assassinated journalists. The posters also have the call for justice written on them in Spanish, English and Arabic. On our way we also bought some flowers. Carnations for Jose, roses for his colleagues. We arrive at the Palestine ten minutes before the act begins. There is a good turnout from the press and the air feels tense. U.S. soldiers look nervous and they act arrogantly. They will not allow us to have our activity within the perimeter so we move to the side, just outside the security zone. The event turns out to be very emotional. We read the texts and tears run out of our eyes, relieving our tension. While I place the flowers I look at you and I feel you alive. Jose, we've made it. You deserve it. Departure and balance. Our intention was to leave to Jordan the next day, but as the situation became more difficult, we decided to leave via Turkey, which meant crossing north through Iraq. Fortunately, everything went well and we arrived at the border on Saturday the 10th. I arrive in my country with a sense of satisfaction. We have remembered you in the very place where you were murdered, we have looked at your assassins in their faces and have demanded justice. We have thanked those who took care of you until the end and we have taken an interest in Iraq's situation. I think we have honored you well Jose, I hope you enjoyed it. I love you!

MILLIONS WILL BE MISSING THE BUS

by Jonah Raskin

In June 1964, I boarded a Greyhound bus at Port Authority in New York. Sixteen hours later, I arrived on schedule, none the worse for wear, in Winston-Salem, N.C. I was 22 years old and starting my first post- college teaching job.

Greyhound still makes the journey from Port Authority to Winston-Salem. The fare is $90 one-way during the week, $99 on weekends, and the trip is faster than it was 40 years ago. This year, Greyhound will take 19 million passengers to cities across the United States. But the oldest, largest and the busiest bus company in the country recently announced it would cut service this summer to more than 250 cities in more than a dozen states, from California to North Dakota, Nebraska to Oregon.

Sad to say, the familiar Greyhound — an icon as recognizable perhaps as a Coca-Cola bottle — will no longer be a fixture on Main Street and across the wide-open spaces of the West. For a lot of small towns, it will end almost a century of service, moving workers to factories and fields, soldiers to military bases and home again, families to reunions at Thanksgiving, Christmas and the Fourth of July.

When I made my journey by Greyhound in 1964, I didn't own a car and couldn't afford to buy one. Traveling by bus was a practical matter of dollars. But the bus was a lot more than that — a place strangers made friends, shared food and stories, a rolling community in close quarters.

As a newly minted master's graduate in American literature, I knew all about mythic journeys, rites of passage and male initiation rituals in novels like "Moby Dick," "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" and "On the Road." I knew, too, that Beat poet Allen Ginsberg had worked at the Greyhound terminal in San Francisco, stacking luggage and carrying suitcases. He had even written a poem about his experiences — "In the Baggage Room at Greyhound" — in which he describes the "millions of the poor rushing around." Setting out from Port Authority to Winston-Salem, I envisioned myself as a hero on my own mythic journey.

The Greyhound took me overnight from the familiar world I had known to a strange, unknown world that I had only read about: the American South. On my epic trip, I met a warmhearted middle-aged African American woman who fed me and entertained me with stories about her family. When I arrived at my destination, her oldest son carried my luggage to his car and drove me to the campus of Winston-Salem State. Greyhound broke down all sorts of barriers for me and for millions of young men and women like me.

In a way, Greyhound played a part in integrating the nation. It enabled me and my contemporaries to move about the country freely, to discover the diversity as well as the inequalities and the generosities of the nation at large.

Everyone in my family has traveled by Greyhound. My youngest brother, Adam, once woke me at 3 a.m. and recounted every leg of his grueling Greyhound ride from L.A. to New York. By sunrise I felt I'd traveled with him.

For his wife, Adelina, Greyhound offered a way to get to places she had only dreamed about. And so it came to symbolize the American dream itself. Born in Mexico, she came to California as a girl and grew up in the Great Central Valley harvesting strawberries, peaches, onions and lettuce with her parents. Greyhound took her from the valley to Los Angeles and San Diego and then to college in San Francisco.

Her 70-year-old mother still travels from the valley to San Francisco by Greyhound. Once a year, Adelina takes Greyhound to remind herself of the road she's traveled since childhood. "Greyhound," she says, "gave me my independence and my freedom."

For millions of Americans, Greyhound's profit-driven decision will surely lead to increased isolation in already isolated places. It may very well make those nearly forgotten men and women long for a past when Greyhound provided a way out and a way up — an egalitarian vehicle to greater social mobility and a vital connection to humanity itself.

Jonah Raskin is the author of "American Scream: Allen Ginsberg's 'Howl' and the Making of the Beat Generation" (2004, University of California Press).

POLLUTANTS CAUSE HUGE RISE IN BRAIN DISEASES

Observer (UK)

The numbers of sufferers of brain diseases—including Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and motor neuron disease—have soared across the West in less than 20 years, scientists have discovered. The alarming rise, which includes figures showing rates of dementia have tripled in men, has been linked to rises in levels of pesticides, industrial effluents, domestic waste, car exhausts and other pollutants, says a report in the journal Public Health. In the late 1970s, there were around 3,000 deaths a year from these conditions in England and Wales. By the late 1990s, there were 10,000.

"This has really scared me," said Professor Colin Pritchard of Bournemouth University, one of the report's authors. "These are nasty diseases: people are getting more of them and they are starting earlier. We have to look at the environment and ask ourselves what we are doing."

The report, which Pritchard wrote with colleagues at Southampton University, covered the incidence of brain diseases in the UK, US, Japan, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and Spain in 1979-1997. The researchers then compared death rates for the first three years of the study period with the last three, and discovered that dementias—mainly Alzheimer's, but including other forms of senility—more than tripled for men and rose nearly 90% among women in England and Wales. All the other countries were also affected.

For other ailments, such as Parkinson's and motor neuron disease, the group found there had been a rise of about 50% in cases for both men and women in every country except Japan. The increases in neurological deaths mirror rises in cancer rates in the West.

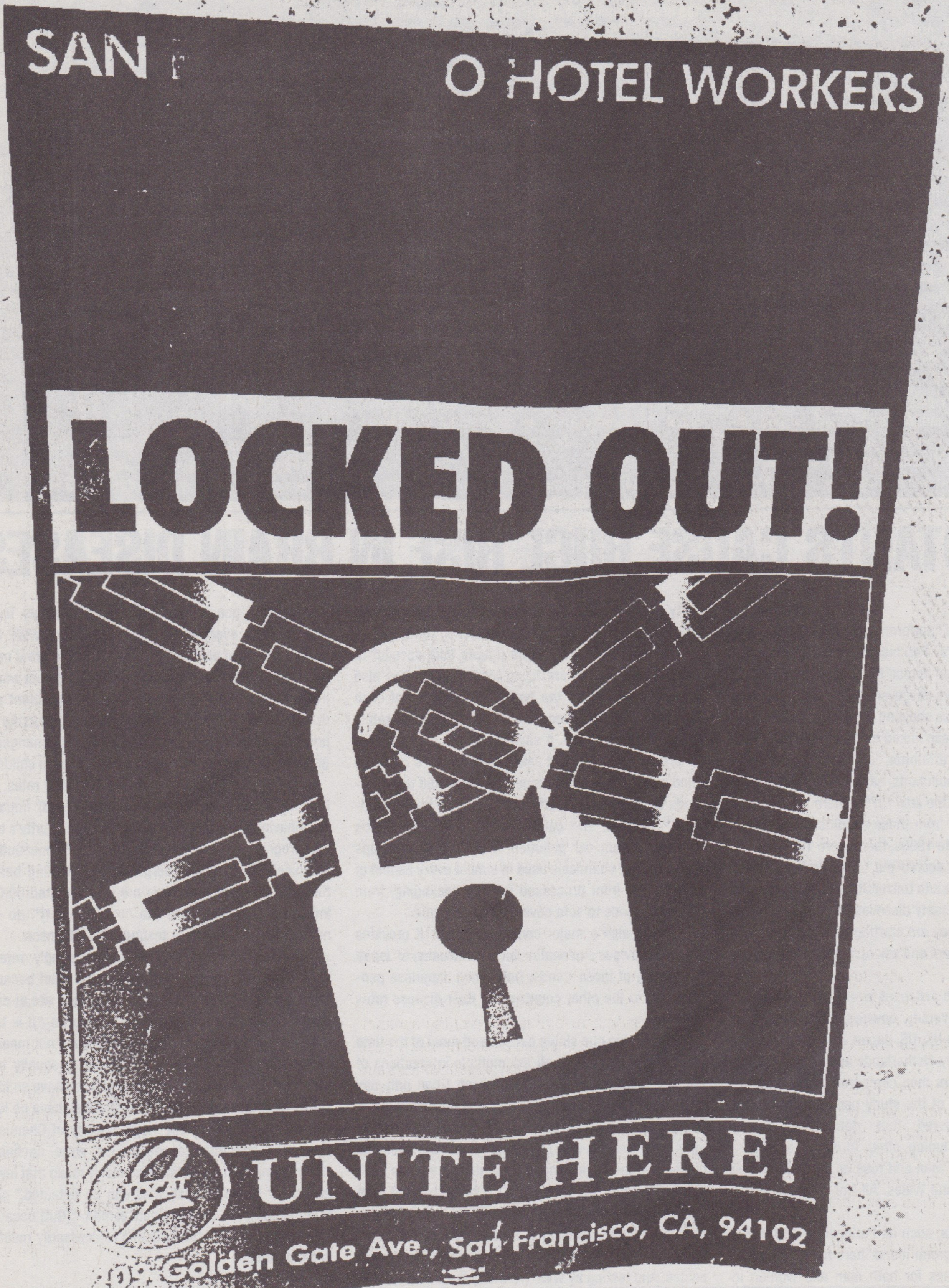
The team stresses that its figures take account of the fact that people are living longer and it has also made allowances for the fact that diagnoses of such ailments have improved. It is comparing death rates, not numbers of cases, it says. As to the cause of this disturbing rise, Pritchard said genetic causes could be ruled out because any changes to DNA would take hundreds of years to take effect. "It must be the environment," he said. The causes were most likely to be chemicals, from car pollution to pesticides on crops and industrial chemicals used in almost every aspect of modern life, from processed food to packaging, from electrical goods to sofa covers, Pritchard said.

Food is also a major concern because it provides the most obvious explanation for the exclusion of Japan from many of these trends. Only when Japanese people move to the other countries do their disease rates increase.

"There's no one single cause...and most of the time we have no studies on all the multiple interactions of the combinations on the environment. I can only say there have been these major changes [in deaths]: it is suggested it's multiple pollution." Pritchard's paper has been published amid growing fears about the chemical build-up in the environment. A number of studies have pointed to serious problems. TBT is being banned from marine paints after it was blamed for masculinizing female mollusks, causing a dramatic decline in numbers. A US report linked neurological disorders to pesticides. And testing by WWF (formerly the World Wildlife Fund) found non-natural substances such as flame retardants in every person who took part. WWF has named chemical pollution as one of the two great environmental threats to the world, alongside global warming, and is particularly worried about "persistent and accumulative" industrial chemicals and endocrine — hormone distorting — substances linked to changes in gender and behavior among animals and even children.

"We've started seeing changes in fertility rates, the immune system, neurological changes [and] impacts on behavior," said Matthew Wilkinson, the charity's toxics program leader. Pesticides and pharmaceutical chemicals must now undergo rigorous testing before they can be used. But there are an estimated 80,000 industrial chemicals and the "vast majority" do not need safety regulation or testing, said Wilkinson.

However, the chemical industry strongly rejects what it claims are often unproven fears. Just because chemicals are present does not mean they are at dangerous levels. But critics are not reassured. "It is true that just because we find a chemical does not mean it is dangerous," said Wilkinson. "But it is equally true that for the vast majority of chemicals we have so little safety data that the regulatory authorities have no idea what a safe level is." The Royal Society of Chemistry also said quantities of pesticides were declining. "Improvements in analytical chemistry mean that lower and lower levels of pesticides can be detected," said Brian Emsley, the society's spokesman. "[But] because you can detect something doesn't necessarily mean it is dangerous."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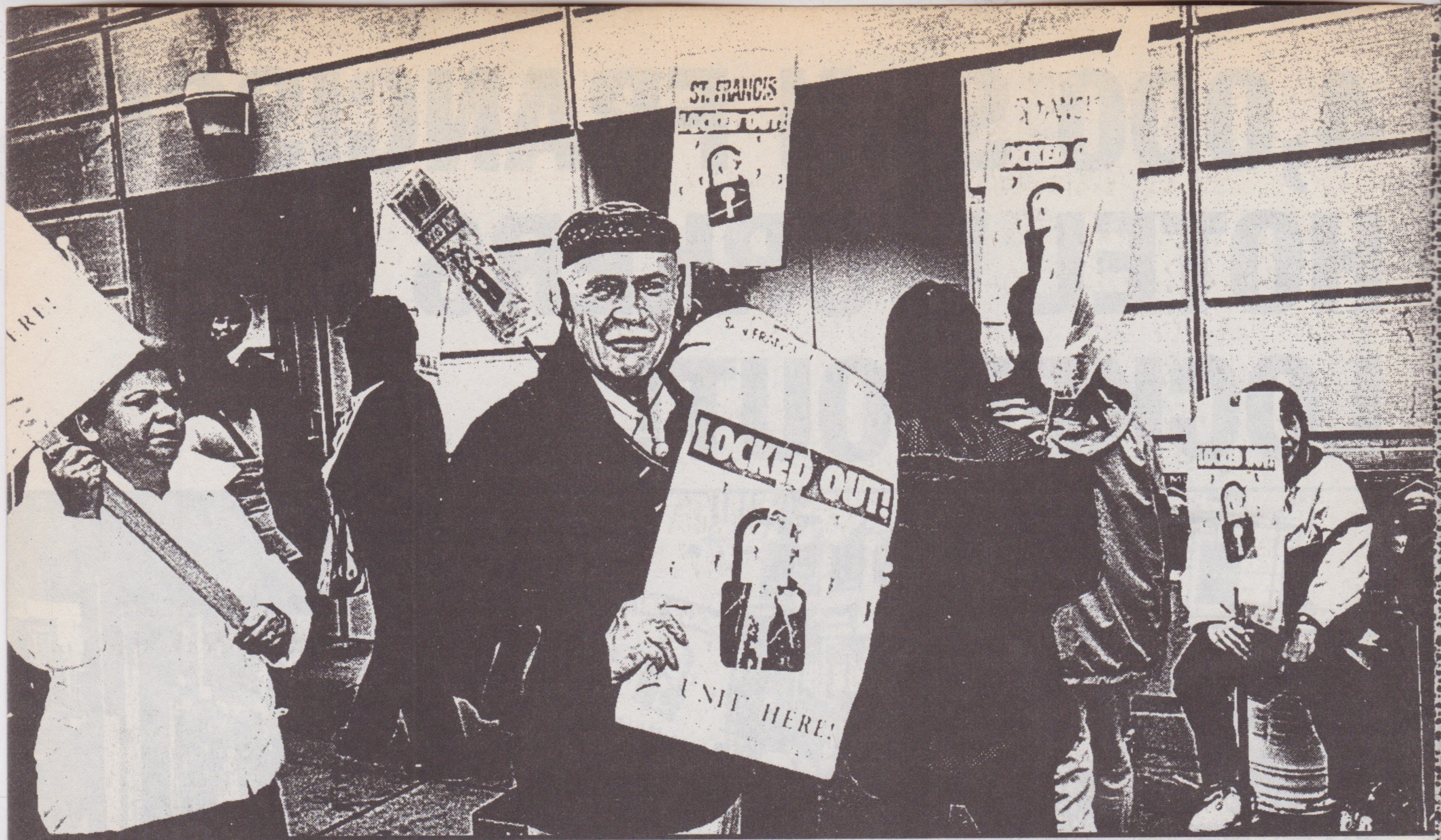
4,000 SAN FRANCISCO HOTEL WORKERS LOCKED OUT!

by Roy Rohlfing, photos by Athena Kaskey

Tired of all the time, money, and effort wasted, and all the ink being spilled on whether one should pull a lever for tweedle-dee or tweedle-dumb, I decided to talk to some courageous people on the front lines fighting for real change and a better life for themselves and all working people. About 1,400 San Francisco hotel workers at four major hotels walked off the job early in the AM on September 29th. The workers, members of UNITE HERE LOCAL 2 (who had been working without a contract since August 15th) had voted overwhelmingly (97%) to authorize a strike when contract negotiations had broken down. The four hotels are part of a group of fourteen of San Francisco's largest hotels that had merged to bargain a new contract with UNITE HERE. The hotel group call themselves the San Francisco Multi-Employer Group (MEG). The hoteliers had a contingency plan in case of a strike and replacement scab workers filled some of the vacancies left by the strikers.

UNITE HERE formed in July of 2004, the result of a merging of two unions UNITE and HERE. UNITE (Union of Needle-trades, Textiles and Industrial Employees) merged with HERE (Hotel Employees and Restaurant
International Union.) The union represents 440,000 throughout North America and is composed largely of immigrants, including a high percentage of African American, Latino, and Asian American workers. The majority of UNITE HERE'S members are women. The union represents about 8,000 hotel workers in San Francisco.

The union and management are at odds over wages, health care, and duration of the contract. Management has proposed a 20 cent hourly raise annually for five years for non-tipped workers and a 5 cent hourly raise annually for tipped employees. The unions counter wage proposal was 75 cents per hour for non-tipped workers and 60 cents per hour for tipped workers. The MEG also wants to raise the amount workers pay for health care from the $10 a month union members now pay to $32.53 per month for the 1st year of the contract. The amount members would have to pay would increase to $273.42 (yes that is two-hundred—not a misprint) per month in the fifth year of the contract. In addition, the hotel owners want to double the amount of time workers have to put in to qualify for insurance from 40 hrs to 80 hrs per month. The union estimates this will result in about a 1,000 of currently covered employees losing coverage. The workers believe that the wage increases are not nearly enough and the shift of so much of the cost of health care to the workers is an unfair burden, The workers—cooks, bellmen, switchboard operators, room cleaners and servers—generally make $9-$15 an hour, up to $20 for cooks. In a city notorious for it's obscene cost of living, many employees I talked to already work two jobs to make ends meet. Many say they now live paycheck to paycheck and coming up with another $200 a month is simply not going to happen. A worker I spoke with, a room cleaner, picketing in front of the St. Francis hotel, her place of employment for 33 years, told me she loves her job but her current wage (less than $30,000 a year) just covers rent, food, bills and



transportation. A drastic increase in health care costs would be crippling. "It would be, 'what do I pay for? PG&E? food? Health Care?'" said Linda Knighten, a cook at the Omni Hotel. On the picket lines, some workers I spoke to despite believing that management's anemic wage increase proposals were a slap in the face, showed remarkable strength, humor and resolve.

Perhaps the thorniest point of contention in the negotiations is the length of a new contract. UNITE HERE would like a two-year contract that would expire and line up with ending contracts hotel workers in other major cities (Detroit, Boston, New York, Chicago, Toronto and the state of Hawaii) have. By doing so the union would greatly increase collective bargaining leverage. The union feels this is the only way they can compete with the enormous bargaining power the hotel corporations have amassed through global consolidation. The four hotels, the union chose to walk out on are all owned by enormously profitable global corporations. For example Starwood corporation made "net profits" of $309 million in 2003, Hilton $156 million and Intercontinental $325 million. The MEG, by getting a five-year contract would divide workers city by city, weakening their bargaining power. The corporate hotels can rely on revenues in other parts of the country to hold out against workers. This tactic, used to great effect against the Southern California grocery workers in their labor dispute recently, would be greatly diminished if many major cities contracts expired simultaneously. Some union officials, workers and news reports I've read suggest that the MEG will not even discuss wage and health care if the union does not accept a five-year deal. On the other hand union leadership and rank and file workers see the two-year contract as a cause, something to fight for, more important than just a short-term wage and health benefit increase.

According to Mike Casey, Local 2 president, when striking on September 29th, the union chose four hotels and a limited two-week strike, so as not to damage the local economy, "a very measured and restrained action". Two days later the labor dispute escalated. The MEG locked out 2,600 union workers at the 10 MEG hotels not on strike. At the ten sites, hotel management escorted out union employees while non-union replacement scabs filed past them and into their still warm seats. On October 13th the lockout extended to the four hotels on strike, when workers as promised showed up for work at the end of the two weeks and were denied entrance. The dispute officially became a lockout, putting over 4,000 hotel workers on the street. The hotels locked out long time employees to try to force them to accept the MEG's proposal. Hotel owners announced that the workers would not be allowed back until the contract impasse had ended.

As of this writing, negotiations have continued, but efforts by San Francisco's Mayor Gavin Newsom and a federal mediator have not brought the sides any closer to an agreement. The Mayor's office has suggested a 90- day "cooling off period" but the lockout continues. The two sides seem to have locked horns. Meanwhile, cars driving by responding to honk for health care signs honk in time with the beats of the buckets, pots and pans of the defiant picketeers. With fourteen hotels raucously being picketed around the clock management is tight-lipped as to how service is being affected. One has to wonder if hotel management is feeling the heat. I have read of reports in the press of cancellations from guests not wanting to cross picket lines, as well as tourists complaining of too much noise. One worker on the lines, over the din of makeshift rattlers of pennies in plastic bottles, and chants of "Check out, *not* in," told me that managers at the hotels are calling workers at home trying to recruit scabs. One union member related how the Argent Hotel's replacement crew managed to light the kitchen on fire.

At the same time unionized members on the picket line for six hours a day, for the last two weeks are having hard times. Strike pay from the union while certainly welcome is a dramatic pay cut. Under state law strikers do not receive unemployment insurance but locked out workers do. As of this writing UNITE HERE has applied for unemployment benefits, which would pay members a bit more. As of yet, the state has not granted benefits. The hotel owners have said they will negotiate wage increases and health care but not the duration of the contract, sticking to their insistence on a five-year plan. This just shows the intent of the corporate hotels to keep the hotel workers divided. One hopes that UNITE HERE, courageous men and women with help from the community, can hold out and secure a fair contract for themselves and in victory benefit us all. (Sources for the above: *SF Chronicle, SF Examiner, SF Bay Guardian* and Unite Here website, as well as interviews with workers and union officials)

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BUFFALO

Welcome to Buffalo, NY, or "Tuffalo" as it was once dubbed in the early days of metalcore. Buffalo has exported many bands through the ages-ZERO TOLERANCE, SNAPCASE, SLUGFEST, CANNIBAL CORPSE, DESPAIR, BURIED ALIVE, EVERY TIME I DIE-and the GOO GOO DOLLS are probably the most notable one. You'll surely notice though that while the GOO GOO DOLLS came from very punk roots-many do not realize this-the rest of the best known bands of the region are metal inspired hardcore, or just straight up metal. Somewhere in the mid 90's things started to shift and faster, more punk influenced hardcore became a little more common here, even though none of the bands were ever as well known as their metalcore counterparts. Bands like SLAVESTATE, HALFMAST, NO REASON, ENVY, PLAGUED WITH RAGE, MEGAWEAPON, AGAINST ALL HOPE and others, all made a small but defined mark on the region. These bands inspired the future generations, if just subtly, to the point where Stephe Perry from *Equalizing Distort* radio show and fanzine out of Toronto believes that every single band out of Buffalo has some sort of youth crew influence. Regardless, over time the metalcore and emo scenes split off from the faster hardcore punk inspired genres creating two very separate scenes. I will take this time to talk about the hardcore punk scene–the community and faction of Buffalo hardcore that I call home.

In recent years a lot of fast hardcore punk has come out of Buffalo. THEY LIVE (NoMansSlave@aol.com), THE CONTROL, NO TIME LEFT, PROJECT GRIZZLY, CAN I SAY, ROBOT HAS WEREWOLF HAND, AWI, DRUNKEN ORGY OF DESTRUCTION, and ONxALERT all made multiple record appearances and got their asses out of town to some degree, with many of them repeatedly battering the midwest, and some of them getting all the way out to the west coast. All of the above bands with the exception of THEY LIVE have all played their last shows or will have last shows right around the time you read this. I guess that's why I thought it was important to do this scene report. This scene has had a lot of great bands pass in just the last 3 months-five bands to be exact. Luckily, many of the veterans have new bands already going, but most importantly, there is a whole new crop of kids coming up that are all starting bands. I'll cut this long-winded intro short so we can get right into it.

Buffalo Bands

THEY LIVE are the longest running hardcore band currently standing in Buffalo. I believe they have been a band since 1996, so that puts them at 8 years. Of course, their output of material doesn't really show it. Most of their releases came out *after* member changes, and typically, the latest release rarely reflects where they are at that time. After a brief blast of activity in 2001, they succumbed to more member changes and have only graced us with a handful of shows in the last two-and-a-half years. For anyone unfamiliar with the band, they began very much inspired by INFEST and gradually fused in more and more Japanese influences, adding to their own tweaked progression on fastcore. THEY LIVE's most

I OBJECT

recent release was a 12" on 625 last year. It seems as though they have faded into the void once again–who knows if this will be the last we see of them?

THEY LIVE have two other counterparts in their quest for brutality. ABUSING THE WORD (aaronweese@hotmail.com), with whom they share a drummer, write songs of beauty, passion, and ferocity all rolled into one, much like TRAGEDY and FROM ASHES RISE. Their melodies are often less subtle than TRAGEDY and their punk influences more pronounced than FROM ASHES RISE but their song writing is elaborate and the drumming is fantastic. Last year they self-released a split CD with EVIL ROBOT US', and have a brand new 7" out now on the combined labels of Art of the Underground and 383.

The other companion band to THEY LIVE would be RUNNING FOR COVER (runningforcoverhardcore@yahoo.com). The ex- and current member factor of this band is too impressive to be denied. Mike Gifford of SLAVESTATE on guitar, two current members of THEY LIVE, and one former member of THEY LIVE on vocals. It matters not that all of those THEY LIVE members are filling different roles than they did in that band because every one of these guys is a musician and technician of brutal hardcore. They hate to use the term power violence as it refers to a specific scene of the West Coast in the 90's, but for those of us that see the term as the definition of a sound, they are it in its purest form. Though if you say this to them they'll use MAN IS THE BASTARD as the example of how they *don't* sound like power violence at all.

The mark of former THEY LIVE members is not escapable in discussions about CORPUS DEI (m1keusher@hotmail.com) either. One of THEY LIVE's early axe-men resurfaced a year ago with a crew of comrades in music and recreational pharmaceuticals. This band captures much of the sludgy glory of the THEY LIVE demo. Everything about CORPUS DEI is ugly-from their bloated distortion, their drunken band members who can scarcely stand, and their hostile lyrics. They just released a 7" on Art of the Underground.

STILLxILL (theedge@stillxill.com) is our final, current connection to THEY LIVE, but that influence is far removed. Instead, I'll site Eric Ellman's appearances in xNEVERMOREx and HALFMAST as his former experience playing drums in straight edge bands. (Though he also played bass in NO REASON.) In addition, STILLxILL also contains ex-members of ONxALERT, xWITNESSx, and THE YOUNG ONES. STILLxILL emulate the musical styling of bands like CHAIN OF STRENGTH, but have managed to keep it interesting in a genre so filled with clones by putting Alex from THE YOUNG ONES on vocals. His screechy caterwauling gives STILLxILL a punk edge that

separates them from the rest. Expect a split label release from them this autumn on Third Party and Art of the Underground.

Normally hardcore bands that have some other hardcore band's younger brother come about a couple years later. In OPPRESSED YOUTH's (XedgeXyouthX@aol.com) case, it's 10 years later. I remember going to one or two PLAGUED WITH RAGE practices and there was this little, tiny, insane kid running around saying funny stuff. He was like four or five years old. The drummer of PLAGUED WITH RAGE, Aaron Martin left hardcore behind shortly after PWR's demise in '96, so it was a great surprise when a kid named Shawn Martin contacted me earlier this year trying to get a t-shirt of his brother's old band. As it turned out, he followed in his brother's footsteps and picked up the sticks and joined a punk band at an early age. At 15 years old he is already laying down solid fucking hardcore beats. OPPRESSED YOUTH are playing traditional 80's hardcore with a nod to 80's NYHC. I missed seeing their last show but caught a video and they were bringing the fury. I guess they are recording a new demo any time now.

Joining the ranks of this new cadre of bands is OURxTIMES (xxdestroymetalxx@newschoolers.com). This band has actually emerged out of the *south towns*, a nether region beyond the southern suburbs and into the hills. I have yet to see this band play, but I heard a practice tape and they are, not surprisingly, shooting for a late 80's hardcore inspired sound. I'm really curious to see them and see how they've developed since I heard that tape a few months back.

Another young up and coming band is VILE PACK (PunkssXeDead@aol.com). They are playing early 80's hardcore punk and they just recorded a demo that I still need to check out. I saw them the other night and their songs are rad but you can tell they haven't gotten comfortable with the live setting yet. I'm really looking forward to see how they develop. Plus, I am stoked on the fact they are a straight edge band of punks.

Continuing the early 80's theme, we'll discuss my two favorite Buffalo bands going right now. First off is CTS (aldirt88@yahoo.com). Now, these 3 initials, C-T-S, have gotten them repeatedly confused with CUT THE SHIT, who's name is already so short and so punk, I don't know why it even needs to be abbreviated–unlike DIRTY ROTTEN IMBECILES or CORROSION OF CONFORMITY-but what do I know? Regardless, the initials CTS have no standardized meaning. From what I understand, because their original name CHRONIC THRASH SYNDROME was a little too silly, they are going the route of MDC and flexing the creativity with the initials-such as with their recent CAMPAIGN TO SHRED demo or their friends calling them CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME. All of this tomfoolery aside, CTS play wicked blend of *Flex Your Head* era 80's hardcore and modern early 80's inspired thrash units like ETA. Their shows are high energy, just like their music, and their live show and their demo are both awesome. Punks Before Profits released their demo tape at the beginning of the summer, and I am sure they are almost gone, but it is definitely worth checking into. They have had a number of releases offered to them and some are in the planning stages, so keep an eye out for those.

My other favorite Buffalo band right now, will finally be fully situated within the city by the time you read this-SKATE KORPSE (thrashunit214@aol.com). Originally composed of two members from nearby Rochester, NY, and one member from Buffalo, SKATE KORPSE will have to commute back and forth no more. The drummer moved into an apartment here in the mid-summer and the singer/guitar player is back at the University of Buffalo and living in a nearby house. SKATE KORPSE capture the purest in surf inspired skate punk. Their recent 7" on Punks Before Profits was absolutely fantastic, and the additional comp. songs they recorded at that same session are equally good. I can't wait until those comp. tracks hit the streets. SKATE KORPSE actually triggered my recent DEAD KENNEDYS obsession and they will inspire you as well-to either crack out your early 80s California punk, or to get gnarly on the hills or in the pools.

Speaking of Punks Before Profits–both of the people that run said label, Barb and Ryan, are in a hardcore punk band called I OBJECT (punksbeforeprofits@hotmail.com). This band is on the road so much, and the band mates are constantly moving from nearby city to nearby city, sometimes I forget they are a Buffalo band. Regardless, they just got back from a 40 or 50 day tour not that long ago and released a split 7" with Forever Youth on their own label.

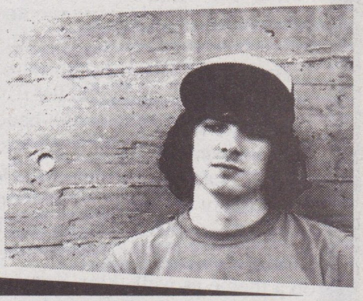
The early 80s punk isn't your thing? We'll work it slowly back up to more modern sounds. PAYBACK are a newer area band that are inspired by the tougher late 80'\s NYHC such as BREAKDOWN and RAW DEAL. I haven't seen them play yet, but I'm sure they're tough.

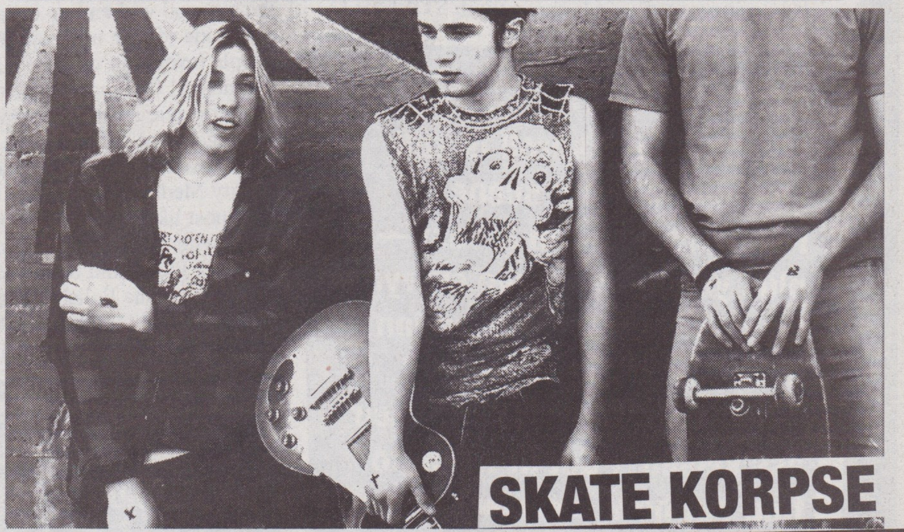
CROSS CHECK are another late 80'\s NYHC sounding band from the area. CROSS CHECK started out with a demo that employed a drum machine and all lyrics about hockey. I know they left the drum machine behind a long time ago, but I'm not as certain about the hockey. Anyway, musically they make me think of the KILLING TIME LP, and if they took the whole thing a little more seriously I think they could be a good, solid band. When they played with INTERNAL AFFAIRS earlier in the summer though, they had the enthusiasm and energy of a doorstop, even if their guitar player can lay down some hot licks. I haven't heard anything out of them since then, so I'm not certain they are still a band.

BITTERNESS (TurnUpTuneOut@hotmail.com) will bring us up to a battery of more modern sounding bands. Maybe BITTERNESS should be listed last because they sound like no other band I've heard. They have fast parts, slow parts, awkward transitions, and screamy yet clear vocals. They have the faintest hints of garage punk, FRAIL, and something like LIFETIME/KID DYNAMITE, but if you bought their upcoming 7" thinking it was going to sound a lot like any of those bands you'd be sorely disappointed. They are, at this stage, beyond description other than to say they are punk.

Buffalo's pinnacle of modern hardcore and latest ex-members delight would be DEAD HEARTS (satanarchist@aol.com). Featuring two members of the recently departed CAN I SAY, two ex-members of this local band that never really got going, THE ALLEGED, and Jeremy Smith, who was the guitar player and principle song writer for HALFMAST, NO REASON, and THE CONTROL. They just played their first few shows and released their demo. All of their output reflects the quality you would expect from seasoned vets. Since some of you are wondering what I mean by modern hardcore–put MODERN LIFE IS WAR, SUICIDE FILE, THE CONTROL, and even a DARKEST HOUR riff (only one) in a blender you would get something like DEAD HEARTS.

Before I leave the realm of bands, I'm





SKATE KORPSE

going to say that there are completely different scenes for garage punk and street punk. I'm not too in touch with those scenes, but I am going to try and spout off some names for you to track down if that is your interest. The old garage punk scene around here used to revolve around THE TYRADES, THE BLOWTOPS, and CONCUBINE FORMING. As everyone knows, THE TYRADES have long since moved to Chicago, and I haven't heard as much about the other two bands but I believe both are still playing punk and getting very drunk. The street punk scene here seems to revolve around BANGERANG and SWITCH 86, with other bands such as CAUSE FOR CHAOS (cause4chaos@hotmail.com) and RANDOM FLAG in the wings. I would really like to see more interaction between these scenes and the DIY hardcore punk scene here in Buffalo. Each of these scenes has their own adherents and it would be nice to turn it into one pool of kids.

BUFFALO LABELS

I'm proud to say that I believe I have the longest running Buffalo hardcore punk label–Third Party (www.thirdxparty.com, 383-x383x@hotmail.com). This June marked 10 years since the release of my very first vinyl record, the HALFMAST *Influence* 7". Here I am, 21 releases later and still putting out straight edge hardcore records. I've gone from working with just my close friends' bands to working with bands from all over the world. Over the years, I have tried to put more emphasis on bands that relay progressive messages and debunk the stereotype of the "jock straight edge elitist". Straight edge isn't about sneakers and colored vinyl, it's a personal but very political statement. It is a boycott against what some believe to be a fucked up industry. The kids who think its about relentlessly hunting down *Chung King* have no concept of the power or depth of their lifestyle choice. It boggles my mind. That said, 2004 was a strong year, my most productive to date. The most recent releases were from bands like GET IT AWAY (Chicago, IL), BAD BUSINESS (Rochester, NY), WITNESS (Rochester, NY), MY REVENGE (Burlington, VT), HOLDxTRUE (Budapest, Hungary), and FxPxOx (Macedonia). The coming months will see releases by POINTING FINGER (Portugal), DAY OF THE DEAD (Portugal), STILLxILL (Buffalo, NY), BLACK SS (Syracuse, NY), and HOSTAGE SITUATION (Chicago, IL). In addition, I trade with bands and labels and have an extensive online distro. Check it out if you get the chance. I carry more than just sXe records, but you aren't likely to find any metalcore or emo.

Just like my set theme with Third Party, Art Of The Underground (www.artoftheunderground.com) operates on a theme as well. Alex Kerns who was in THE YOUNG ONES, AWI, and is currently in STILLxILL runs an eclectic label whose broad focus is exactly as the label's name implies. He will release any form of underground music that grabs him, from the blasphemous hip-hop of EBOLA VIRUS, to the quiet folk of ROBERT BLAKE and ERIK PETERSON, to furious hardcore like ABUSING THE WORD, CORPUS DEI, and ROBOT HAS WEREWOLF HAND. Like Third Party, he runs an extensive online distro and loves to trade.

The smallest local label that I know has a few releases out is 83. Gus has put out records by the now defunct melodic hardcore band, CAN I SAY, and is involved in the recent ABUSING THE WORD project. I'm not sure what he has lined up next.

Finally, on the label front, is Punks Before Profits (www.punksbeforeprofits.com). PBP has been around for a while now and also focuses on DIY punk. THE YOUNG ONES, AWI, I OBJECT, 17TH CLASS, WAR SQUAD, CTS, and SKATE KORPSE have all worked with PBP. Last I checked they did not have an online distro, but they trade as well and constantly cart their crates of records to shows so get in touch if you want to trade for their releases.

Places To Go

Before I go I want to mention a battery of places for you to visit while in Buffalo. First off, the best record store for hardcore, punk, metal, and indie rock is Sit And Spin (5866 Transit Rd., Depew, NY 14043, 716-684-4676). It's not in the city, but its only 10-15 minutes from anywhere you might be in the city so hit it up. While at Sit And Spin you can go two stores down to get some vegan-friendly, General Tso's Tofu that is quite good. However, most people will be in the city and will end up eating at a place called Taste Good where they have a multitude of fake meat options at some of the area's cheapest Chinese food. Most people love to hit up Amy's Place in the University Heights section of the city for their $1.00 breakfast before heading out of town. If in the Heights and looking for pizza, most people hit Sal's for the NY style pizza and NY style attitude, but vegans are out of luck at Sal's. I spend most of my time eating at Feel Rite and at Natalie's. Feel Rite has a deli with tons of vegan options and Natalie's is a quality Mediterranean place that will fulfill your falafel needs. The venues you will most likely attend will be the Access Community Center, in the Heights, along with a couple of basement venues in that neighborhood, followed by Mohawk Place, and Soundlab, downtown. Hopefully we'll see some more shows take place at the Polish Library on the East Side of the city. Any punk in Buffalo should be able to direct you to most of these places.

That's it. Thanks for reading.

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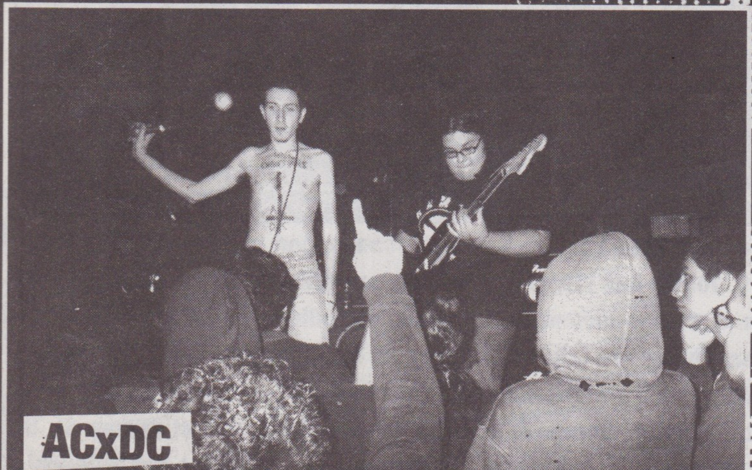


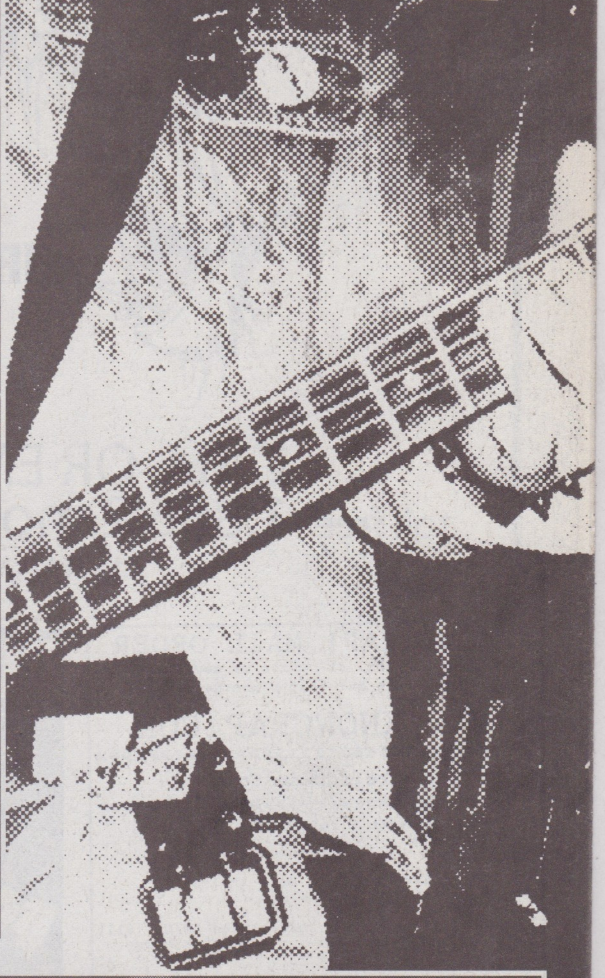
ACxDC

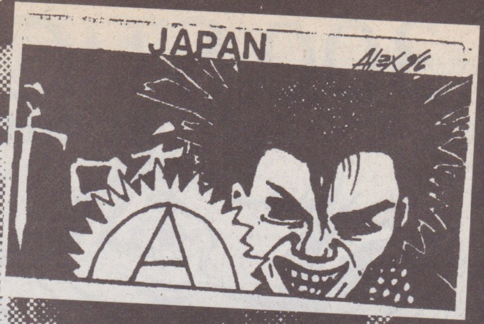
Photos of these Southern California hardcore bands courtesy of Sam Thomas III from Inglewood, CA. You can get in touch with him via 2905 W. 101st ST, Inglewood, CA 90303. Now if only we could get a new Southern California scene report...

Okay, so there hasn't been a Bay Area scene report in sometime, but luckily Larry Wolfley has stepped in to start contributing some photos to provide some regular documentation of the exploding punk scene here in the Bay Area. Photos are (clockwise from the left) Fleshies, Death By Excess, Born/Dead, Hepsi and Paxane. Be on the lookout for more of Larry's photos in the coming months & as usual on the photo wall at Gilman St. Of course we're still looking for a Bay Area scene reporter, so get in touch!

NO STAGEDIVING

Recent pictures from Japan sent in by Randy Carncross, who lives in Osaka. Clockwise from left: Exclaim, Total Fury, Jellyroll Rockheads, & Razors Edge.

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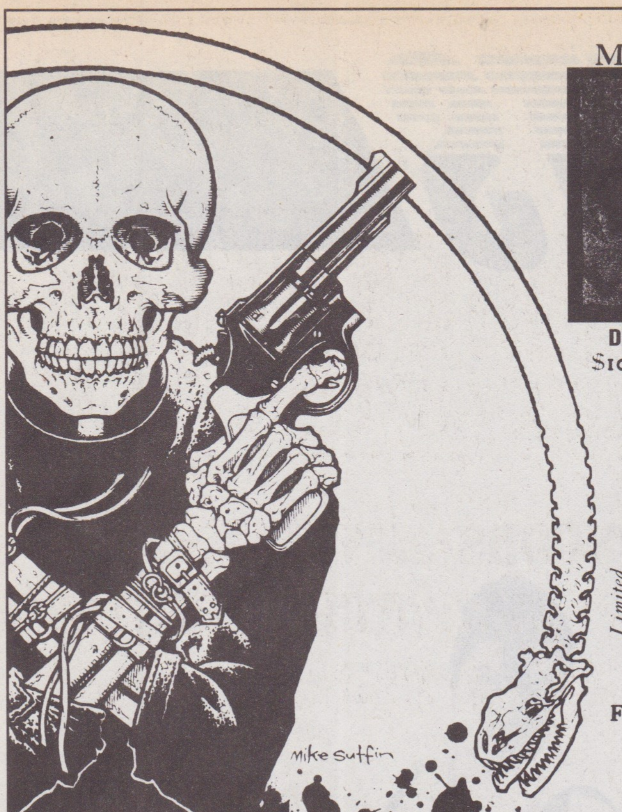

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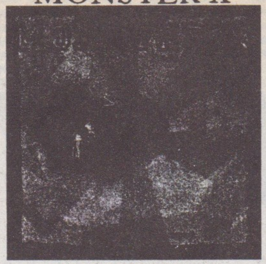

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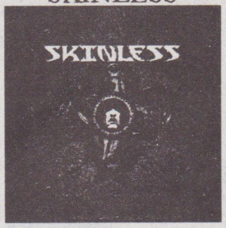

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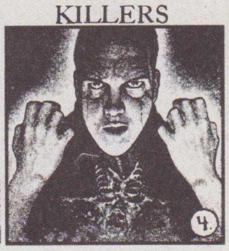

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THE ACCIDENTS

MRR: To get started, state your name, social security number, address, and eh... what you do in the band.
My name is D.Vacuum (guitar/vocals). I am old. To help me here tonight I've got the all-seeing eye Fred Tank (bass) even older. The other guys are Kid Kreole (guitar, backing) and R.R Jennings (drums). We live in a hick-town in Sweden about two hours west of Stockholm called Örebro...
MRR: Who of you are responsible for the birth of The Accidents, and how did it all start?
Our former drummer, God bless his soul, and I went down to Greece a couple of years ago, to get away from our daily-piss-ass-working-lives of driving forklifts and curing hangovers at work. Well when we got down to Greece we noticed that we only had like five or six albums with us (Status Quo, Dr Feelgood, Hurriganes). And after a few days we just thought it was time to start a new band which would put the elements of boogie rock and fifties stompers into a new light. The Accidents were born as we were sippin' Mediterranean drinks in the shade of planted palm trees... pretty ain't it....
MRR: There are various indications on that the spirit of Hank Williams lives on through The Accidents, what's your comment on this?
I have a really hard time imagining that this is true. but yes. Hank Williams is a big influence on "modern" rock n' roll music. Just like all the other really old stuff Carter Family, Woody Guthrie etc. and that goes for the Accidents as well
MRR: Who, or what, else are you influenced by?
Speed has always been a big influence on the band alongside with Drink and good time rock n' roll. Of course all music that we've been listening to since we were kids has also a lot to do with our sound like Black Flag, Circle Jerks, The Boppers and so on. But I guess the thing that makes the Accidents what it is, just good ol' fun. No business controlled four-week recordings or rehearsing every other day. Just keeping everything really simple = fun, as it was supposed to be....
MRR: The Accidents consist of past and/or present members of Voice of a Generation, Nasum, Genocide Superstars, etc. etc. Does this have any impact on the band, and if so, positive or negative?
I don't really know, but I guess that one could say that it has helped us to get people to notice us but on the other hand we can't tour as much as we would like to because of our duties in other bands. But musically the answer is no...
MRR: There seem to be a very alive music scene in your hometown, Örebro. If people are passing through, what are the good places to check out if they're looking for a good night on the town?
For being such a small and shitty town there's a lot of good bands here and quite a lot of good guys unt freulines as well. For a good night out I would recommend you to start early in the afternoon at NOBEL (good food and service for a reasonable price), then at around 22.00 get a cab to either SOMBRERO BAR (rock n' roll, rockabilly), or MITT ANDRA HEM (good rock/punk dj:s). And when you are done with those places just ask someone for the nearest biker club and you are set for at least 12 or 15 more hours of drinking ok...
MRR: The rumor has it that The Accidents were supposed to tour Finland, But never quite made it all the way. Care to give us the whole story?
I think the story is out on our website. But there was numerous death-threats involved. Now things seem to brighten up again and hopefully we can tour Finland in late summer when the north of Europe is at its peek and the midnight sun blazes our pale faces...
MRR: More scandals you want to share? And please, we're only interested in the real juicy stuff. What about The Accidents vs. the law?
Let us put it like this. When you spend all of your free-time drinking with lunatics and people who rather look at their new polished windows than having sex, strange things happens...
MRR: You've released all your previous stuff of various record labels, and Now you've chosen a new label(s) in Bootleg Booze Records (LP) and Rock Alliance (CD) for the release of the debut full-length, what's the story behind this?
Fred Tank: Well, actually the reason for releasing the full-length on Bootleg Booze. is that the guys seemed to be really interested in our music and not only in getting a new album out on their label. Plus they seem to be really nice guys (where is our goddamn money?). Our earlier stuff has been released by people who we know through our "vast" contact net in the Swedish and German scene...
MRR: Since it's your first full-length coming up I guess this is the longest you've been in the studio, has this done anything with the outcome of the songs? And once again you've chosen to work with Mieszko and Soundlab, how much does it help to actually know the guy who's recording and to do it in your own town?
It's very good to record with Mieszko because we've known him since we were kids and I (D.Vacuum) and R.R. Jennings have been playing with him for ten years in Genocide SS, so he knows what we want, and of course it's cheaper... The amount of time spent in the studio is never the same as the time spent recording. Ramalama, Ramalama.
MRR: What makes a good Accidents song just that, a good Accidents song?
The dynamic bass lines, the furious drums and the magnificent guitars.... I don't know we just do what we like and it seems to be working out pretty good. It's not like we sit around talking about the songs before we record them. The Accidents is not a democracy. Me or RRJ write songs at home and bring them to rehearsal and if the other guys like them we record them, if not, we just throw them away.
MRR: What are the keywords on how to describe you to a person who's never heard the Accidents, but probably would love the band.
"Oohh, they sound like Hurriganes on speed." is probably a quite a good way to describe the band.
MRR: What do you do to maintain your status as *the* rock n' roll band of the World?
We try to maintain a steady flow of girls, drinks, drugs and rock running through our systems at all times, and of course write good music.
MRR: What's coming now? Tours, more records... what's planned?
The album is out and its called *All Time High* we will tour after the summer festival months. Europe and Scandinavia, then we'll see. We have been talking about recording a live album and record a couple of new 7". You'll just have to wait and see.
MRR: And to finish this off, how much of the things you've said is Actually true?
Exactly everything, because I'm in a "dry-period" and I am trying to make up for all the bullshit I usually spread around... Thank you.... Ramalama, Ramalama rock n' roll is king. See you in court.
www.theaccidents.net
www.bootlegbooze.com

THE AMERICAN IN ME...

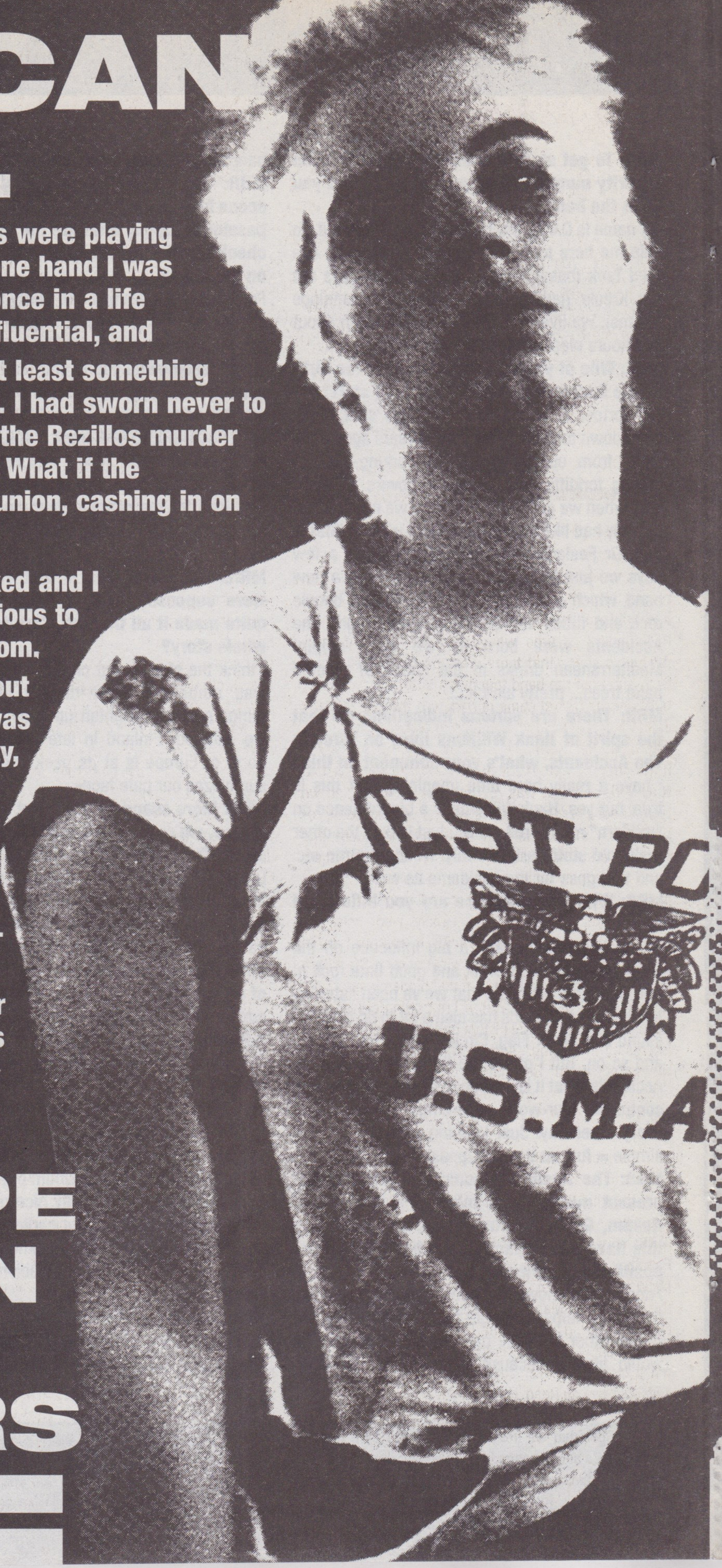
When I first heard that the ScAvengers were playing at Gilman I had mixed feelings. On the one hand I was really excited to have what could be a once in a life time oppertunity to see an incredibly influential, and one of my personal favorite bands (or at least something vaguely close). But I was also skeptical. I had sworn never to go to another reunion show after I saw the Rezillos murder song after song a couple of years back. What if the ScAvengers was just another crappy reunion, cashing in on the past?

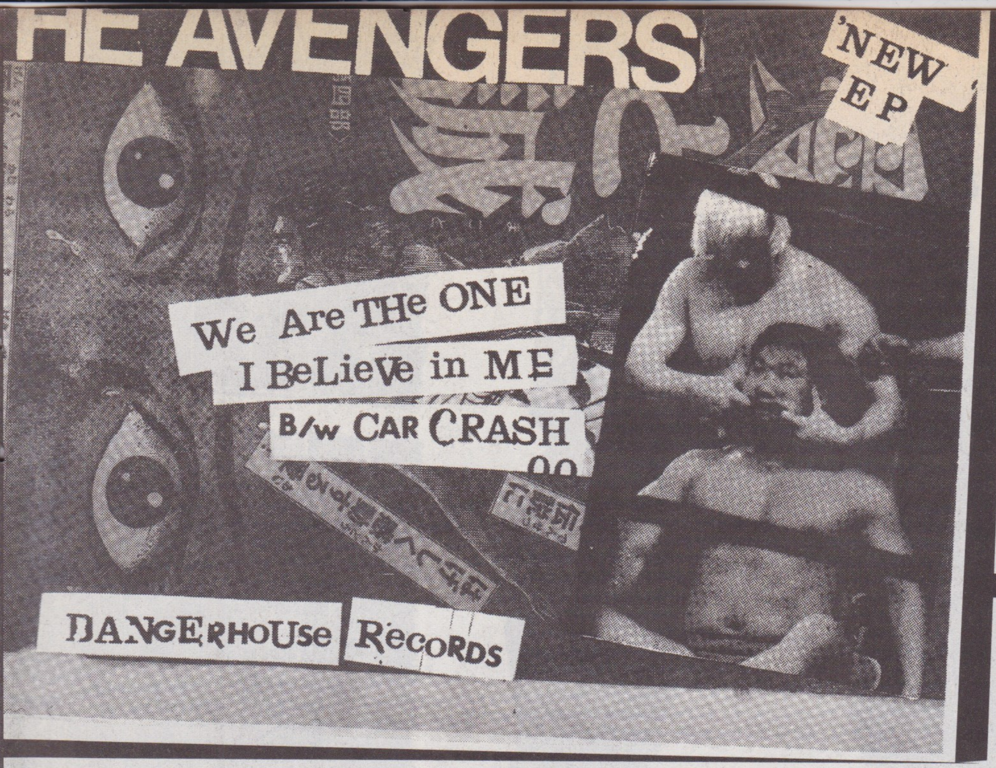
As it turned out, the show totally rocked and I was a happy camper, but I was still curious to find out where Penelope was coming from.

We met at a little cafe in Berkeley about a week after the show. True to form, I was running late that day. I turned up sweaty, out of breath and about half an hour behind schedule, but Penelope was still more than happy to answer all my questions at length.

Thanks to Sparky for helping me transcribe, and to Penelope for fixing my spelling and filling in a few details after the fact. Interview by Ben Ditch. Images stolen from Avengers records, *Search & Destroy* fanzine, and *Maximum Rocknroll*'s big box of photos.

PENELOPE HOUSTON OF THE AVENGERS





MRR: Why did you re-unite the Avengers after so many years?

Penelope: Well actually, it was because of the brand new record, *The American in Me,* but I did it first five years ago. I did the ScAvengers with Greg and Joel and Danny Panic and that time we wanted to re-record three Avenger's songs that there were no good versions of. Greg and I got the band together just for the recording, but then the record came out and we thought, "Well, it would be fun just to do a couple of shows," and so, we called that the ScAvengers and we did it. I guess we did it at Gilman, Great American, a few times, then LA, and New York and that was it. That was all in '99, so we haven't done anything for five years. I've been doing my solo career this whole time, so I was pretty busy, and people were always asking me when the ScAvengers were gonna play again, and other people were always saying, "Why don't you put out more Avengers material, there's gotta be something?" Finally, I got sent this board tape of a live show from '79. It was our third to last show, so we put it out on vinyl and on CD with a couple of extra studio tracks I found hidden in my room. And so then I thought, "Well if I'm putting out another Avengers record, maybe I'll just call Greg and see if he's interested in playing." And he was like "Yes, yes, yes, *please* let's do it!" Because he hasn't had any musical outlet, he's been studying classical guitar, and he's been playing with his kids, who were at the show. I think his son plays drums. Anyway he never plays out and he was into the idea of doing anything. So then, I asked Joel again and he said yes, and said, "Let's ask my drummer from the Plus Ones, Luis." So, that's how it came about this time

MRR: Why did you start the Avengers originally?

Penelope: Well, it was brand-new at the time. Our first show was in June of '77 and we were playing a party for the Nuns at the Mabuhay, because they had just gotten off some big gig at the Winterland or something. Oh, no, the first show we did was in a warehouse and we just did a bunch of cover songs. We did Patti Smith and "Vicious" by Lou Reed, just a bunch of cool cover songs. And then, we got this show and the Mabuhay and we suddenly decided we needed to write our own music. So, we wrote seven songs in a week. But I was going to art school. I was going to the SF Art Institute, Danny had gone there, and I had seen him just hanging out at the Mabuhay. I was going out to some shows, but there were just a few shows at that point. I think the Damned came to town, and the Ramones, and Blondie. The Nuns were already together by then and Crime, but there really weren't that many local bands. And it just seemed like this wild new thing.

Danny, who I had met, had this warehouse with a practice studio with some microphones and a little PA. One day, when they were gone, I put on some records and started singing through the microphone and PA and fell in love with the power and volume, and when they all came back from wherever they were I said, "Guess what? I'm your singer." And that was how it got together. Greg was a friend of Danny's from Orange County, and he was trying to get away, so he moved up at the drop of a pin to join Danny's band, which didn't really exist. And then we got this one bass player, but we ended up getting another bass player, which was Jimmy Wilsey. Danny was sort of the impetus and we were a couple, conveniently, or not so conveniently. So I think through our whole two-year existence we were an item, and pretty soon after we broke up, the band broke up.

But by then, punk had its little scene. It was just brand new. There were punk bands in LA, there were punk bands in Seattle and Vancouver, and we would go and stay on the Screamers' floor; we would stay on people's floors when we went to their town, and then when they came out here, they would stay on our floor. The Industry was against us. Nobody was getting signed, everybody just put out singles, and there was no putting out an album. It was unheard of to record a whole album, and you know, I think that was actually a very good thing because that way people chose their best two songs and recorded them. Now people choose their first twelve songs that they ever wrote and record them, and it's like, "You know, you coulda just whittled that down to two and you would have been a lot better off".

MRR: Where are all the old Avengers members now?

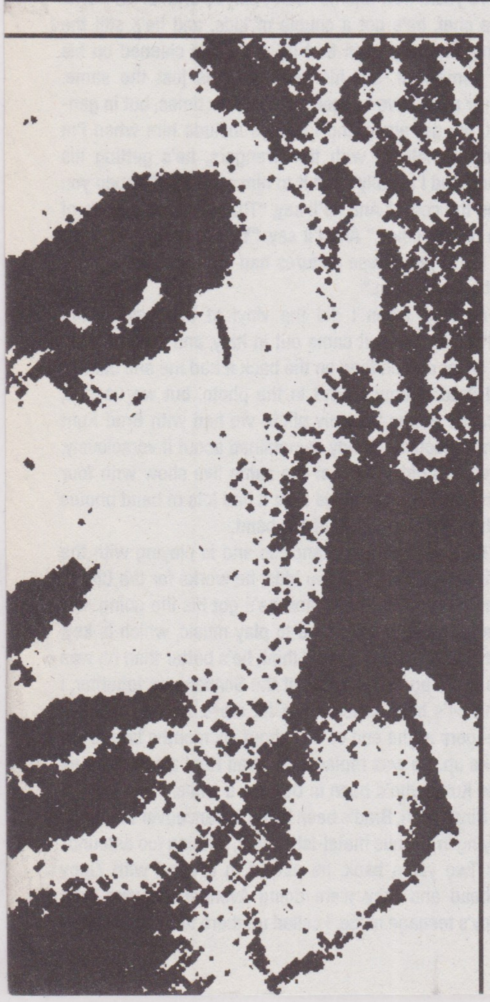
Penelope: Where are they now? I love this part because, well, actually two of them I don't know where they are. Our first bass player, his name was Jonathan Postal, he was this really obnoxious photographer and he moved off to New York to be an obnoxious photographer and I think had some kind of success with that. I don't know where he is, haven't heard from him in a really long time. He was only the bass player for maybe five shows, or four shows. Then Jimmy, who replaced him, he went on to be in Chris Isaac's band. He had a lot of success with that. Then he broke off from that band or got fired or something and fell off the edge of the world and disappeared to a dark black hole for a while. He was in touch for a while but then he dropped off the face of the earth again and I hadn't heard from him for maybe two or three years. Lookout said they had royalties for him and his address isn't working. Whoever's not collecting their royalties is really gone. So then, I got an email from him in December and he said he was married and his wife had just had a baby boy named Waylon J. Wilsey after Waylon Jennings. And I thought that was so great. He's working full time and they bought a house, he's got this baby, so his whole life is brand new.

Danny Furious, the drummer, he's been in Sweden for 15 years now and he hasn't played drums. He works as a chef, he's got a couple of kids, and he's still the same kind of person that he was; he's cleaned up his act somewhat, but his personality is just the same. Danny and I have banged heads a few times, but in general, we get along and I always include him when I'm doing something with the Avengers, he's getting his share. And I usually send it to him and say, "I hoped you liked the cover." And he'll say, "That's a great picture of you on the cover." And I'll say, "Yes, I think so, I agree, it's funny how these pictures had me in the front, right in the foreground."

Anyway, when I did the vinyl of this new album called *Zero Hour*, it came out in Italy, and it had me on the cover and on then on the back it had me and Jimmy, and Brad. Danny wasn't in the photo, but we used it, because it was the only photo we had with Brad Kunt from Vancouver. Danny complained about it voraciously, so when I did the CD of the same live show with four extra songs on it, I made sure it had lots of band photos with all four members of the band.

Greg lives in San Francisco and is playing with the ScAvengers. He's got two kids, he works for the City of San Francisco full time, and he's got his life going. But he's still sort of desperate to play music, which is key, and he's still really good; I think he's better than he was five years ago, when we put the ScAvengers together. I think he's been practicing a lot more. He had quit the Avengers at the end of '78, about six months before we broke up. He was replaced by Brad Kent also known as Brad Kunt, who'd been in DOA for a while.

Since then, Brad's been living in Vancouver and been playing in various metal-ish bands, nothing too astounding. Two years back, he played in a band with Zippy Pinhead and they were doing Avenger's covers with Zippy's teenage niece. I called up there to let them know



that *Zero Hour* was coming out with Brad's performances on it, and he had some money coming to him. Zippy said, "I don't know where he is, and the last time I saw him he was playing guitar in front of a liquor store for spare change." I said, "You're kidding." I mean, "Vancouver can't be that big, try to track him down." I think he tried to get a hold of Brad's sister, but he wasn't able to find him. I talked to Joey Shithead and I don't think he knows where he is either. So, Brad's missing in action. Which is a drag. I don't know where Jonathan Postal is, but he's probably doing fine. He didn't seem like he would ever get too messed up. One out of six is missing in action. Everyone's still alive as far as I know, which is really good; with a lot of these punk bands half of them are dead.

MRR: Most of them died before Ronald Reagan did too, which is pretty terrible to think about. I don't think anybody's as old as Ronald Reagan was.

Penelope: It's like, he's was preserved or something.

MRR: How does it feel to sing these songs that you wrote so long ago? Do you still believe in the ideas behind them, the idealism, all that stuff behind punk rock, beyond just the music?

Penelope: It feels great to sing them. It's so much fun. There's a little bit of nihilism in them that I don't feel. I'm probably maybe more idealistic than some songs, like, "Crazy Homicide," and "End of the World." Some of the ones that we're not doing live but that are on the live recording that came out, like "Misery" and "Time to Die." "Zero Hour" was about earthquakes. There was a lot of death imagery and stuff towards the end. Maybe it had more to do with the end of the band. But in general, I'm amazed at how timeless some of the songs still are. Last night, Mission of Burma was playing at the Fillmore and they invited me to sing, "The American in Me." They'd been doing it as an encore for their whole tour. I updated one line of the song, but it's like, shit man, nothing's changed. I mean, there's so much people still haven't figured out. Then there are more relationship-type songs like "Car Crash" and "I Want In." And those are just universal "why did you leave me" songs. I guess the only ones where I would have a bit of hesitation are, "We Are the One" which was always kind of tongue-in-cheek, you know, never serious. A lot of people think of it as an anthem, but it was partly a joke. It's still fun to sing and everybody knows the words, it's great. And then "White Nigger," there's the problem with the word "nigger." It's weird because at the time the word was somehow further away from the general consciousness, I think Patti Smith had the song "Rock and Roll Nigger," John Lennon wrote, "Woman is the nigger of the world." In a way, the word had a different value than it has now. Its usage has changed a couple of times since the song was written.

MRR: It seems like people just freak out before they even, they just hear the word and don't pay any mind to what the context is, they're just like, "Oh my god, you used that word!"

Penelope: I wrote that song 25 years ago, and I can tell you what it means to me. It's about wage slavery, about having to be a slave to your job, and, in fact, the whole song seems quite innocent compared to all the things that have happened since then. So, I'm really happy singing the song live, but talking about it to people is a little harder than singing it. It's not because of the lyrics, they still mean to me what they meant back then.

With "Open Your Eyes," there's a line in there, "Gonna get a job, and join a fucking union." Right? I'm in the union.

I work at the library in San Francisco, and Greg is in the union as well, cause he works for the city. Joel works for the library, so I think he's covered by the union but he might not be a union member. But it's just a little funny to sing, like, " Gonna get a job, and hope you have a fucking union," or something; should I change it? Naw.

MRR: I always thought that was the funniest, punkest part, "Join a fucking union!"

Penelope: Well, yeah, except the next line is, "That way you know nothing's gonna happen."

MRR: So do you have any plans to keep on doing stuff with the ScAvengers or even work on new material or keep on playing shows, or are you just gonna call it quits after this?

Penelope: Well, you know, I've discovered that it's easy to book the ScAvengers. People are really into us. And now, since the last time we did the ScAvengers, it seems like a lot of bands have reformed and either made it seem like reforming is a shitty thing to do, or else reforming is a good thing to do.

Like in the case of Mission of Burma—I got to sing with them last night. I've seen them before and thought, "These guys are great." They just put out a new album, so I think it's great that they're together.

But other bands that come buy, they just can't even write anything original. But, we got asked to play a punk voter festival in Seattle, and it's gonna be Avengers, X, and Mudhoney. It's a three-day festival so there's gonna be a lot of other bands. That'll be fun, that's in September. And then, people keep saying, "We want the ScAvengers to play this show in Germany," or, "We want you to play London, or here, or there, or New York." Greg works full time, but if we can just do short little weekend trips and they pay for themselves, then it's something that we might keep doing.

The question about writing new songs is a good point. It's hard to do in the right style, because I've been writing in this different style for a long time. Although there are some Penelope songs which could be turned into punk songs.

MRR: Sometimes the songs that you least expect to make good punk songs actually are the best ones. Are you still doing music besides the ScAvengers?

Penelope: Yes I am. I have been since—well, when did the first record come out. It was called *dash 30 dash;* it was a single. It came out in '86, so that's sort of when I started my folk career. I've had maybe 12 full-length records come out since the Avengers, of different varieties of folk and rock. *The Pale Green Girl* is the newest one, it came out on the same label the same day as *The Avengers;* it's kind of folk rock and kind of rock. It has a '60s flavor to it. But when we play live, it's pretty loud. In fact, we do versions of "The American in Me," "Corpus Christi," and now, "Paint It Black."

MRR: Maybe you could book something at Gilman. I don't know if they'd be into it. I don't know if you'd be into it.

Penelope: I've played with my folk band at Gilman before, it was funny because this was when I was much quieter, and everyone sat on the floor. And you know, sitting on the floor at the Starry Plough is different from sitting on the floor at Gilman. You're more likely to get glass in your pants or something.

MRR: Or not being able to stand back up 'cause you're stuck to the floor!

Penelope: The other thing was that the kids who were putting it on made all these flyers that said, "Avengers." It's not even the same as the Avengers. It was really folky.

MRR: I've got written down here, "Why not start a new band?" But I guess you *do* have a new band, so it's kinda redundant.

Penelope: Is that a question about a new punk band?

MRR: That's what I had in mind when I wrote it, "Why not just start a new band?"

Penelope: If we got offered something that was incredible and Greg couldn't do it. I guess we could. It's not like the Avengers would be impossible to copy. As long as you have the voice.

MRR: But what about doing a band that's not even the Avengers?

Penelope: A punk band?

MRR: Yeah, a whole new one.

Penelope: I don't know, I mean the songs I write now aren't really punk.

MRR: So have you kept up with the punk scene since the Avengers broke up?

Penelope: Well yeah. Right after the Avengers broke up, I moved to LA and I was hanging out there, and of course, I still knew people in bands. At that point, in the early 80s, you had Black Flag, and all these hardcore bands, and I really wasn't into hardcore. I was into more kind of art punk bands and more melodic stuff.

Once I moved to England, I started listening to different stuff, and the Violent Femmes were around and I see them as a bridge between genres. Tom Waits, as well, he went from punk to folkier stuff. The Violent Femmes, they had the punk attitude, but they used folk sounds. So I got out of the whole punk thing; it just seemed like it had turned into hardcore and post-punk.

It sort of disappeared for a while, and then the whole East Bay, Green Day scene started coming up, and I didn't know that much about it and I kind of thought it was a little derivative. And then I met Billy Joe, and we wrote a song together and he introduced me to Joel and Danny Sullivan, and we recorded some songs. We did "Corpus Christi," which was Billy Joe's favorite Avengers song. And I started listening to some Green Day and I just thought they were great. So at that point, I started to know a few more people in the scene. Some people at Lookout and stuff. And I went to Gilman and I thought, "Wow, all these people are just so positive and friendly." It just seemed like a whole new bunch of people who weren't so deadly serious. Before that, when I got interviewed by Tim for *MRR,* there was this whole, "That's not punk, you're not punk," back and forth thing. And people would endlessly write letters through *MRR* to each other, and I thought, "This is ludicrous." So I thought it was great that there were all these people who were into having there own scene where people were starting their own labels and putting out magazines. The whole thing around Gilman and Lookout just seemed like it was much more positive. I really liked that, I thought, "These kids are so cute! I just love them." So, that was kind of my reintroduction; I forgave the world for hardcore punk and decided I could like punk again. But I don't really know that much. I mean, Joel is always telling me, "Oh yeah, we're getting a gig with so and so," and I'm like, "Is that good or bad?" He'll tell me they're huge, and I'll say, "Really? I've never heard of them, what kind of band are they?" And he'll tell me they're "emo" something. I don't even know what that means. No one's explained it to me.

MRR; It means bad.

Penelope: The only thing I've figured out is that I think the reason people still like the Avengers is because we're really basic and classic. Classic rock. I mean, not classic rock like radio classic rock, but just basic song writing, lyrics, and performance that make us still pleasing to listen to. It doesn't really sound dated. It definitely sounds like more than just some shitty idea that lasted a couple of years.

MRR: So how do you think the scene has changed since back in the 70s?

Penelope: Well, punk has already taken over the world and given up already, right? I mean back then it was brand new and everyone thought it was the most shocking horrible thing they'd ever heard and no major label would sign bands. People thought the Knack was a punk band, and the Police. They were called new wave. But real punk bands were not getting played on the radio and not getting signed. So since then, you've had huge gigantic punk bands, and then you

have things like Avril Lavigne, who's a teen idol dressed in punk clothes. But the punk scenes that occur in little towns and cities, I think they're still pure and still great. It's great that it's still happening and it's a great expression and outlet for people. But punk in general… the shock is all gone. It doesn't mean what it meant back then, it's just another genre of music. I think it's a good thing that there are these scenes, but the meaning is somewhat different. If they all got up, joined together and went to all the protests and voted, that would be a great radical thing. If people really could be moved to do something in the world, to make a difference for all of society that would be great, but in the meantime creating their own societies is also a good thing. But you can't really separate yourself. To say that's mainstream and we're over here so that doesn't effect us, well, the government is so fucked up right now that it simply effects everybody no matter how faraway they want to be from it.

MRR: So, a lot of older punk bands have been reuniting over the past few years. The Sex Pistols, Black Flag had a reunion—which is ridiculous—the Misfits; even Iggy and the Stooges, with Mike Watt on bass, which is really weird. For the most part, a lot of them seem to be just cashing in on there past. How do you think the Avengers are different from that?

Penelope: Well, we're the *ScAvengers,* not the Avengers. If I was going around calling it the Avengers and doing as many shows as I could, I suppose it wouldn't really be any different. One of the reasons I didn't call it the Avengers is because I always think it's kind of cheating when you say that it's a band and it's not the same people. When I saw Mission of Burma it's the same guys who are all 50 years old and they're all rocking out just as hard as they can and they're having a great time and the audience is having a great time, it's really exiting, and they sounded incredible. Just the fact that people can get along again after 30 years, after having broken up and not spoken to each other, is good. But then, I didn't go and see any of the Sex Pistols reunion shows or anything like that. I'm not nostalgic. The reason that there haven't been a whole lot of Avengers or ScAvengers tours is because I am not that interested in doing it. When I put a record out I think, " Oh, we'll have a record release party. We'll play Gilman. It'll be fun. Maybe we'll do a show in the city and that'll be fun." And then, I start getting these calls, and so it kind of goes on and on. But it's not my intention to reform the Avengers and do a whole lot of tours and play festivals all over the place. It just has its own momentum. And Greg is totally into it, and the other guys seem to be into it. And some of the stuff, like this show in Seattle for "No Vote Left Behind," which an effort to get young people to vote, I think is important. And if they had asked my solo band to do it I would have done it, but they asked the ScAvengers and I'm not gonna say no. I guess the difference is I'm not really putting the band back together and touring. These are just kind of one-offs.

MRR: If you could meet yourself as you were in 1978,what do you think your younger self would have to say about what you're doing now? Not just the ScAvengers, but also the folk music?

Penelope: Oh, oh, she'd say, "You go girl!" About the ScAvengers, if my previous self saw me now, maybe she'd say, "Write some new songs!" But considering I've written a whole bunch of other songs, I think I would be exited. I can actually sing better now than I could back then, but after 16 songs, I need a break. And I noticed the same thing with the drummer. He was playing this stuff and we were going, "Well you know, you're not playing it as fast as the Avengers record." Danny Furious was a great drummer, and I didn't quite realize that at the time.

MRR: How do you feel about having been in this band that was so influential to so many people and so much of what came afterwards?

Penelope: It's funny because, the Avengers were popular when we were together for those two years, then there was a period where it was as though we had disappeared off the face of the earth.

Then the pink album came out in '83 and that did well even though we had long since broken up. Now there's a whole new generation of people who have heard it, and people who have told me, "Yeah, I found this old tape in my dad's shoe box of tapes, and my mind was blown." That's literally the next generation, the children of the original fans. I find it really exciting. It's great to know that I influenced people who came after me, that the music stands up to the test of time. I'm proud of that. And that's why I got such a jolt at Gilman. Just to see how many people knew the lyrics, and how many people were five or something when we were around. It was inspiring to me. I also like it when girls tell me that they decided to become musicians because of my part in the Avengers. That makes me feel good.

MRR: What was it like to be a young punk in San Francisco in the late 70s?

Penelope: It was great, because we were making it up as we went along, there was no Hot Topic. There was nowhere to shop; there was nowhere to get the records. You had to dig, you had to *search* for new records. You got your information from friends; you couldn't really listen to the radio and hear punk stuff. So there was sort of a West Coast scene and people circulated through that from Vancouver, Seattle, LA, and San Francisco. It all felt great and new. Plus all the bands were totally different. When we played, there was the Mutants, there was Crime, the Nuns, Negative Trend, the Sleepers. All totally different bands for the first year or so, and it seemed like it was all a lot looser and you could do whatever you wanted. There wasn't a set idea of what punk was and what punk wasn't. And we all knew each other, we were all friends

MRR: How did people react to you on the streets and stuff?

Penelope: Oh, people freaked out. I had blue hair for a while. I lived out in Hunter's Point, I was sitting at the back of the bus, and everyone would shout, "What happened to your hair! How did that happen?" and I'd say, "My hairdresser did it." "Your hairdresser must hate you!"

I remember walking past a gym where kids were playing basketball, and I walked past the open door and suddenly there was silence and all these people came out of the gym and they were just standing in the street staring at me. I guess 'cause there weren't too many punks, so when you just looked the way you looked jaws would drop.

MRR: What do you think about the Bush administration, and the occupation of Iraq and everything that's going on right now?

Penelope: I've been to a lot of the protests, and I give money to various organizations. I think that if we can, the ScAvengers will do some local shows for the anti-Bush things that are happening. This is definitely not an election to sit back on and say it doesn't make any difference. People said that about Gore, that there wasn't any difference, but there's definitely a difference between the agenda of the hardcore conservatives and the middle-of-the-road democrats. Even if you don't like the middle-of-the road democrats, we can't have that. Michael Franti said something really smart on the radio the other day, that if Bush got in again, that would be his last term because of the term limits, so he would basically be free to do whatever he wanted. Once he gets elected again, it will be the last time, so he can just go wild. It would be a disaster. Living so close to Berkeley, it's easy to feel like everyone feels the way I do. And then you go to other places in the country and you realize that we have to stand up and be counted, because it seems like there's a lot of us here, but there's not a lot over all. If you're a radical or a liberal, then you're in the minority and you need to make noise.

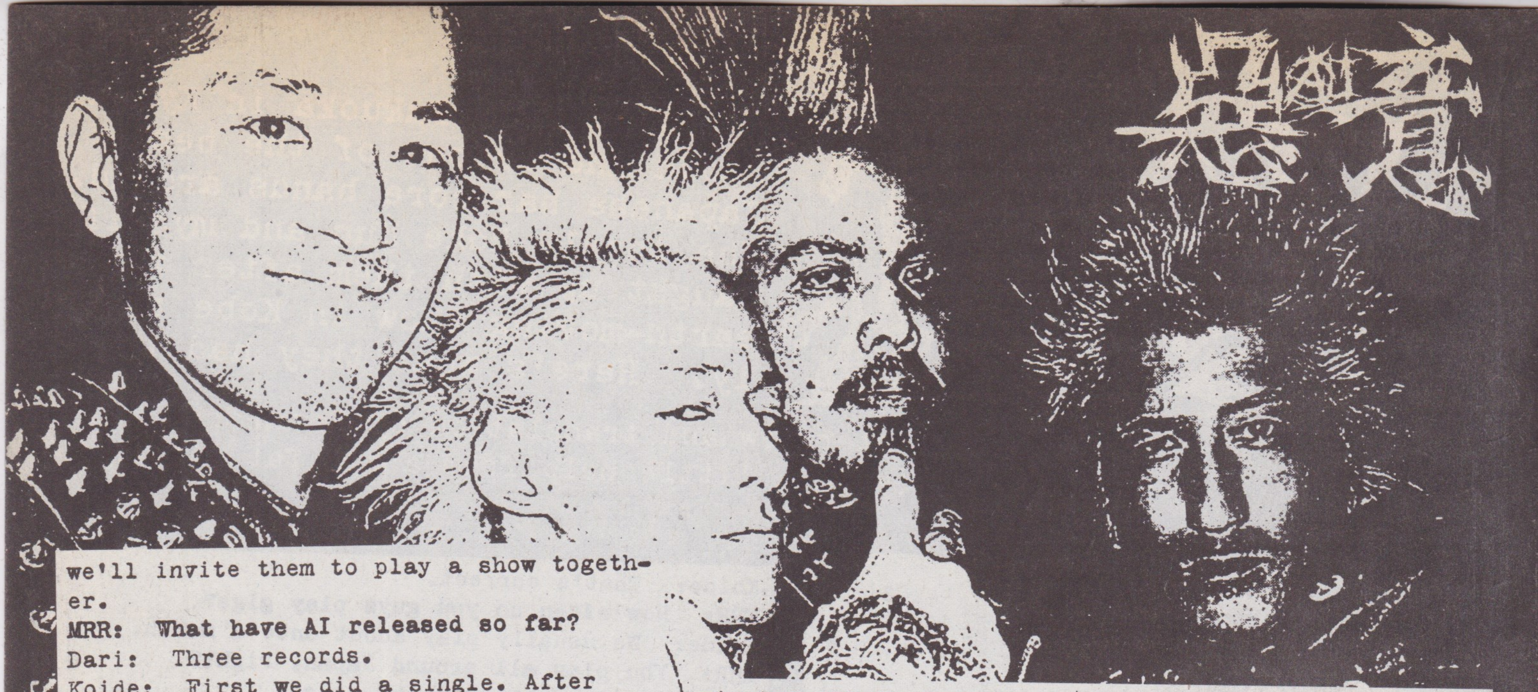
MRR: So are you going to vote for Kerry this year?

Penelope: Yes. I mean, it's not something that I'm completely thrilled about, but if he's got a chance to beat Bush, then I am thrilled. Once he gets in, if that happens, then yeah, everyone's going to have to keep on making enough noise to keep things going in the right direction. Just getting Bush out is a step in the right direction. Yeah, so I'm going to vote for Kerry, I'm going to vote against Bush, however you want to put it.

AI hails from Fukuoka in Kyushu, Japan and is one of the best Japanese hardcore bands around. The lovely Hoke Kun and myself caught up with them after their earth-moving show in Kobe recently. Here's what they had to say...

Interview and translation by Kevin Hunt
(with a little help from a big fat fish!)

MRR: Please introduce yourselves.
Koide: Koide, vocals.
Dari: Dari, drums.
Shima: Shima, bass.
Jagu: Jagu, guitar.
MRR: When did AI form?
Koide: Seven years ago.
MRR: Are you all original members?
Koide: No, Dari and myself are the only original members. Shima and Jagu are new members.
Shima: I've been playing in AI since 2000.
Jagu: I joined last year.
Koide: Jagu used to play in a band called TRUST.
MRR: What does the name AI mean?
Koide: Love!
MRR: Looking at your logo, you've chosen the Chinese character "aku/(a)." In that character, "evil" is represented in the "a" part and the character "(i)" from "(i)mi" means "meaning." Could you tell us why you've done this?
Koide: We put the "Aku" character together with "i", right? We used the "i" character because it is composed by writing the character for "sound" over the character from "heart."
MRR: So the name itself means "love," but when written in Chinese characters it means "The Evil Sound of a Heart."
Koide: That's correct.
MRR: How often do you guys play gigs?
Koide: We usually play about once a month.
MRR: You play all around Japan, right?
Koide: Yeah, all over the place.
MRR: Where is your favorite city to play in Japan?
Dari: For me, it's Fukuoka, our hometown.
Koide: Playing at home is fine, but with it comes a whole bunch of extra obligations. I really enjoy that part too. Organizing, you know?.
MRR: How about outside of Fukuoka?
Everyone: Hokkaido! (laughter)
MRR: Hakodate in particular?
Dari: Yep!
MRR: This isn't your first show in Kobe is it?
Koide: No, this is our second time.
Fellow local drinker at our table: It's your third time.
Koide: Oh, third time then! (laughter)
MRR: What other bands do you like to play with when you put on shows?
Koide: Cool ones! Bands who we think are good. Not only hardcore bands, but also a lot of good rock bands as well. If we see a decent band



we'll invite them to play a show together.

MRR: What have AI released so far?

Dari: Three records.

Koide: First we did a single. After that was the album. We just released a new 7", *Ain't No Slaves*, on Bloodsucker Records.

MRR: Koide, please tell us about the lyrics to the songs on the new 7." What about "We Slaved"?

Koide: Ah, that one! We were born in Japan and spend most of our lives working. Nothing ever changes or gets any better, so we feel disappointed. We are slaves to the country. We work until we die. If you realize this, then you have a chance to do something different with your life. If not, that's your lot until you die. You're used as a slave.

MRR: A waste of your one and only life?

Koide: Exactly. If you realize this, you can also realize that a different way of life is possible. It's a song about my disappointment, but I'm also trying to tell people to take a good hard look at their lives and maybe progress.

MRR: How about "Bullshit Confusion"?

Koide: Wars basically break out because one powerful person has a stupid idea. That person influences others and the shit hits the fan. It's about war.

MRR: Who writes the songs in AI?

Koide: We all do.

MRR: Who writes the lyrics?

Koide: Me.

MRR: What are your individual reasons for playing in this band?

Koide: I want to do this thing as hard as I can. I feel that I want what I've done in to live on after I die. We play once a month and all the day-to-day bullshit and poverty can be put aside and I can enjoy the show. Being on stage and playing for thirty minutes a month is totally worth it all. Those 30 minutes are my purpose.

Dari: I'm in this band right now to achieve world domination! (laughter!)

Jagu: I'm in AI because I love to play with these guys. I'm the biggest fan of AI and I have a chance to play in the band!

MRR: Recently, interest in Japanese hardcore has increased overseas. Some non-Japanese feel that Japanese hardcore lacks somewhat in politically charged lyrical content. What are your opinions on this?

Koide: In many cases, Japanese people are living in a state of blissful ignorance (heiwa boke). Many people have lost their ability to think for themselves. I believe that we young people need to really start to think again. We're human beings after all. Many foreigners have experienced war, but in Japan, where we have the Special Defense Force, there are no young people who have experienced war firsthand. Overseas you have so many people who have experienced things that Japanese can't even begin to think about.

There may be a lot of d-beat bands with anti-war lyrics, but we haven't experienced the realities of war. Seriously, if we don't start thinking about important things soon, Japan will turn into a really fucked up place.

MRR: Japanese punks are different to American punks in the sense that Japanese society has a much lower level of tolerance to non-conformity and individuality. What do you have to say about this?

Koide: I'd say that is true.

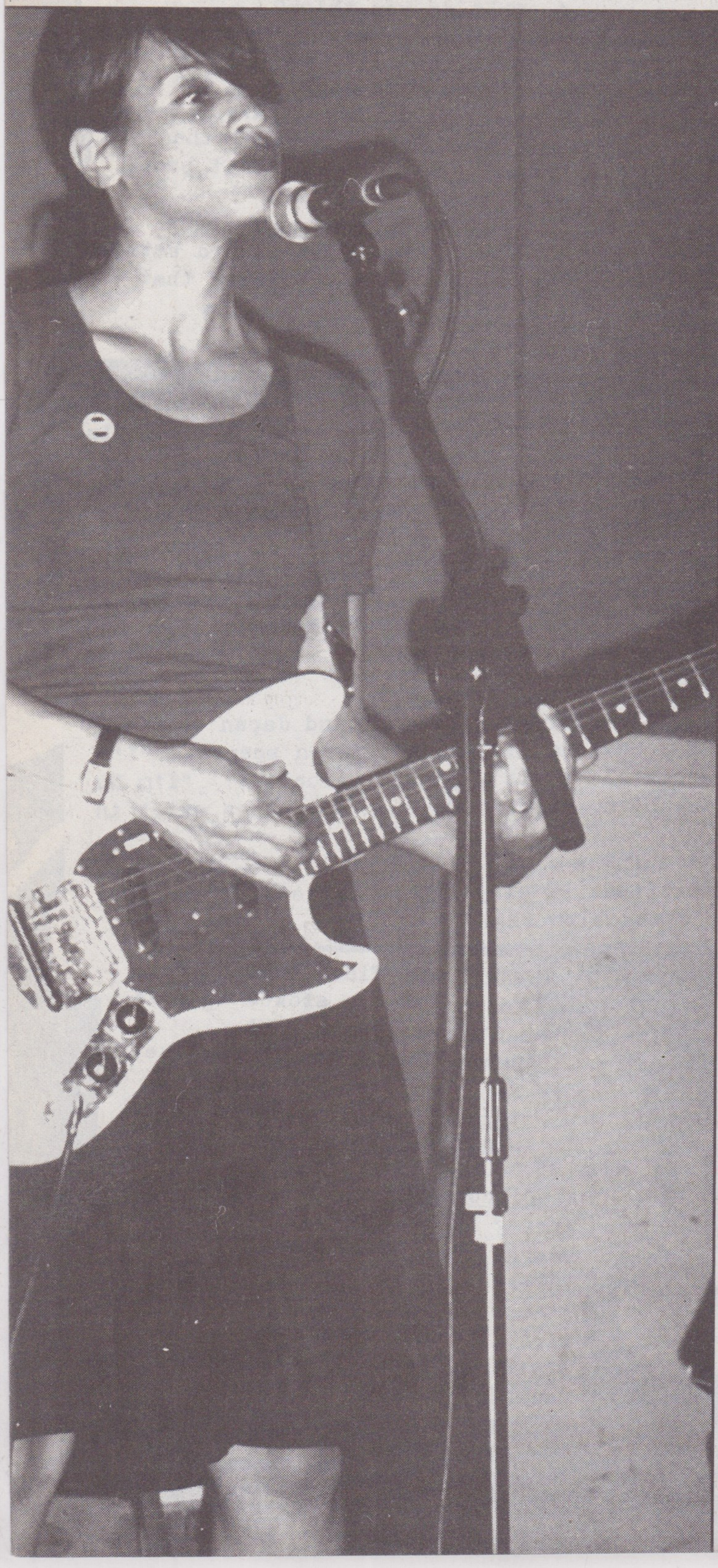
MRR: But recently, younger people have been getting away with being

pierced and tattooed more, right?
Koide: Well, yeah. You see, that's now fashionable in Japan among young people. They get tats nowadays or dye their hair and walk down the street just to get into fashion magazines. *Burst* and other magazines sell their images. People don't think for themselves and it then becomes a mere fashion.
MRR: When did you all first get involved in hardcore?
Koide: About fifteen years ago, I played in a band called BANDIT. Before that, when I was in junior high school, I started playing in my first band.
Dari: As for me, I would be up at the front during BANDIT's gigs, cheering them on! (laughter!)
Shima: I started getting into it when I was fourteen. I'm thirty-one now.
MRR: For over half of your life then!
Shima: Yep.
Jagu: The same goes for me. I was about fifteen.
MRR: How are things different for now you compared with back then?
Koide: It's more real for me now. Back then, I'd listen to lots of different bands and draw influences from them.
Dari: There are a lot less badasses around now. There's still a bit of violence in the scene today, but nowhere near the amount that there used to be.
Shima: Nowadays there's so much more information going around about what's going on, which is good. But on the other hand, I think that people get sucked into trends more easily now. It's harder to find the real thing now.
MRR: Now it's easier to release records, but is this necessarily a good thing? What do you think?
Shima: That's a difficult question. I'd never oppose a band releasing anything so it's not necessarily a bad thing. I think that if you believe that you have a legitimate reason to release something as a band, then you should. You just need to make sure that you do it properly.
Koide: As for us, we look at every chance to release something as an opportunity to make the next record better than the last. We release the absolute best record that we are capable of. It gives us a good idea of how "together" we have it as a band.
MRR: Could you tell us what bands have had the greatest influences on AI?
Koide: For me, it's more the people who come to an AI gig for the first time that I've never met before rather than actual bands.
Dari: Specifically, AI! (raucous, drunken laughter!)
Jagu: All the North Kyushu bands that I saw when I was young. AGGRESSIVE DOGS looking like THE EXPLOITED with their red mohawks! CONFUSE and KURO. (laughter!)
MRR: Let's wrap this up then. (cheering!)
Hoke Kun: In some of the larger cities around Japan with bigger scenes, there are obvious divisions between scenes. "I'm a crusty!" "I'm about old style Japanese hardcore!" "I'm Nu School!" "I'm blah, blah, blah!" Do such divisions exist in Kyushu?
Shima: No, I don't think so.
Hoke Kun: It's great that AI play with a variety of bands. Tomorrow, you're playing with FRAMTID.

MRR: Any final comments?
Koide: We're stoked to have an interview in *MRR*!
Dari: We're not through yet. We'll conquer the world!
Jagu: More love, more beer!
MRR: More AI! Thank you!

AI Discography
Arming Rebellion With the Sounds of Hearts 7" (Bloodsucker Records, 1998)
A Hope on the Concrete CD-includes first 7" (Bloodsucker Records)
Ain't No Slaves 7" (Bloodsucker Records, 2004)

THE A-LINES



Whatever happened to Thee Headcoatees? When Billy Childish pulled the plug on Thee Headcoats in 1999, it also spelled the end for their raucous, much-missed little sister-splinter girl group. Since their split, Holly Golightly has maintained the highest profile, establishing herself as a snarl-y Beatnik *chanteuse* and cult figure. Ludella Black has so far emerged with one solo album, *She's Out There* on Damaged Goods, in 2000. And after a long absence, Kyra Rubella and "Bongo Debbie" Green have finally returned with all new, all girl band The A-Lines. The band is augmented with two other members with prestigious girl-punk backgrounds of their own: Julie Hamper (formerly of The Stuck-Ups in Seattle; coincidentally, she's also married to Billy Childish) and Delia Barnard (most famously of Mambo Taxi, and a string of other choice garage bands like Baby Birkin and The Handsome Family). While some ingredients (the band's catchy buzz saw minimalism, frantic tempos and Kyra's primal scream therapy vocal approach) will feel pleasingly familiar to Headcoatees fans, The A-Lines frequently spike things with a harsher, artier, more experimental edge. When guitarist Julie contributes occasional Yoko Ono-esque dissonant backing yelps to Kyra's lead vocals, it evokes a nastier Kate and Cindy from The B-52's. Not that The A-Lines have completely jettisoned the sweeter, old school 1960s girl group feel: their yearning, wistful first single "One Day" is worthy of The Shangri-las. The A-Lines themselves define these mercurial mood swings and influences as "Lady Punk". You can find out what they mean for yourself when their debut CD comes out, on Purr in the UK and Sympathy for The Record Industry in the US.

Kyra: Vocals
Julie: Guitar
Delia: Bass
Debbie: Drums
Interview by Graham Russell.
Photos by Claudia Andrei

MRR: In the gap between the end of Thee Headcoatees and the emergence of The A-Lines, did you have a particular vision of what The A-Lines would sound like? How did this line-up come together?

Kyra: It grew out of sheer boredom and frustration! Me and Julie got together, and then we got Debbie involved. Initially I played bass, but singing and bass playing just wasn't working. So then we got our star bass player Delia. It grew from there. But we've all known each other for years and years and some of us had been in bands together.

MRR: Was it important that it be an all-female line-up or was that coincidental?

Julie: It was really important to me.

Kyra: I think it was important for me. I wanted to be in a girl band. Was it important to you, Debs?

Debbie: It's great to be in an all-girl band. I'd never really done it. I never quite got there. Even in The Slingbacks, a guy sneaked in. It's great we finally got to do it after all these years! Especially with stuff with Thee Headcoatees, with people thinking we were playing our own instruments.

Delia: On the record covers there were quite often pictures of Thee Headcoatees with guitars. It was frustrating sometimes seeing Thee Headcoatees and seeing Debbie singing and knowing she could also drum really well. And that Holly could play guitar. It was a shame that people didn't know that, that it wasn't more evident.

Kyra: The way that grew was that all the girlfriends (of Thee Headcoats) got together to sing a song. It was never like let's be a proper group. Hence The A-Lines!

Julie: *(To Kyra).* I think The A-Lines must be nice for you. Thee Headcoatees was really an extension of Billy, he called the shots musically. It's nice for you to be able to express yourself and have a lot more control. She writes the lyrics. This is *your* thing. I don't think you'd all had the chance to write songs.

Kyra: Thee Headcoatees was a different kettle of fish. But if it hadn't been for Thee Headcoatees I might not have ever even thought about being in a band.

MRR: That was something I wanted to ask anyway: How much artistic involvement does Billy have in The A-Lines? Any?

Delia: He produced the album.

Julie: He comes in and gets us going. He keeps things on track when we're in the studio. Obviously we have a history with him: he's my husband; he's known Kyra and Debbie for a long, long time. I can't imagine he doesn't have an influence, even if it's by osmosis!

Kyra: It's great having him in the studio, but as far as everything else is concerned we do everything. It's just us four.

Julie: Musically what we're doing is just our own stuff. He doesn't have any input on what songs are being written or what songs we're choosing to do as covers or anything like that.

Debbie: I think it's good to have his name bandied about. It's bound to do us some good. It's good to have that association.

Julie: It can only be good for us. *(In some ways The A-Lines are shaping up to be the distaff counterpart to Childish's latest band The Buff Medways the way Thee Headcoatees was to Thee Headcoats in the 1990s: they've honed their chops and cultivated a following opening for The Buffs during their residencies at London's garage punk dive The Dirty Water club).*

MRR: It feels like with this band you've progressed beyond garage punk into something more experimental and avant-garde.

Kyra: I'm glad you noticed that! I think we're trying. We're finding our way, because we all come from the garage punk tradition, that it would be within that field but we're changing and becoming more daring in ways and trying out different things, with what we could do with more New Wave-type influences.

MRR: *(To Kyra).* When I interviewed Thee Headcoatees for *MRR* years ago, you told me about the music you were listening to as a teenager in Belgium: bands like Malaria!, German experimental punk, Belgian punk. It feels like you're returning to those roots with The A-Lines.

Kyra: Yeah! The A-Lines brings that back to me, that sort of initial burst of enthusiasm when you hear something – this is exactly what I want to do! That's what I feel like with The A-Lines.

Julie: I don't come from the garage punk scene. My other band (The Stuck-Ups) was just a punk band. So I don't have that past. I think part of the thing that interests me more is just being in a punk band. In the others, their influences are more garage-y. Delia especially. I just want to be in a punk band! In the start up to New Wave, in the late 70s and early 80s there was a weird punk thing going on and I hope we capture a bit of that and bring it into The A-Lines.

Debbie: I don't think "punk" says it, really. When people ask me what we play, I always find it really difficult. I say it's sort of a punk band, but it's *not* really ...

Julie: I call it Lady Punk. I'm in a Lady Punk band!

MRR: You can see the idea of "Lady Punk" and femininity in the way The A-Lines present yourselves visually onstage, the contrast between the prim floral 1950s cocktail dresses you sometimes wear onstage and the abrasive punk music you play.

Kyra: Well spotted!

Julie: In The Stuck-Ups it was all very snotty and we wore matching outfits, and we were really bratty. I was a bit younger and I think I felt a bit bratty. I don't really feel that anymore. It's an extension of our personalities. It's not deliberate.

Kyra: I don't think it's something that we thought out for hours on end, and came up with this brilliant idea of visually presenting ourselves. It's just how we are – maybe exaggerated a bit.

Julie: I will be wearing my rock slut outfit this evening!

MRR: Your what?

Julie: Rock slut.

Debbie: I think we started off trying to do more of a matching thing. Not everybody matching, but a similar theme. But it didn't work. So now anything goes.

Julie: I mean, we do check with each other (beforehand) ...

Delia: But we never actually bring what we say we're going to bring and we have always have totally the opposite outfits and end up looking a bit Village People.

Julie: I do think we try to stay in the same *area* ... it might not be exactly matching ...

Kyra: We have yet to play a gig where one of us turns up 1950s, another one turns up disco roller babe, another one turns up rock chick. We still have to work on that.

MRR: Your choices of cover songs: Love ("Can't Explain"), Electric Eels ("Agitated") and Kleenex ("Nice"). Is there a thread that links those choices? I can see why Kleenex would be an obvious choice ...

Julie: They're one of my favourite bands.

MRR: For anyone reading this, who may not be familiar with Kleenex, explain who they were.

Julie: They were a late 70s Swiss punk band. I liked their energy, the two women singing together. The sheer pleasure in what they do. To me they were just better than all the other girl bands – I better not say! I was going to mention the other bands I think they're better than, but I won't! They were a lot *weirder* and also *simpler*. They were light years ahead of other girls who were out there. *(In 1980 the band re-christened themselves Liliput after the Kleenex tissue corporation forced them to change their name).*

Kyra: They were trying to do something different within the punk field, without being pretentious. They're not being precious about it.

MRR: They're always mentioned in the same breath as The Raincoats and The Slits.

Julie: I think they're a lot better than them. Those were the two bands I didn't want to mention! I think The Slits went up their own asses and lost the plot entirely.

MRR: They learned to play their instruments too well.

Julie: It's that initial burst, which you find with so many bands: the first record, and then they lose the plot and try to get better and try to get more sophisticated. They bury the joy of what they've done with loads of different takes, and over-dubbed this and over-dubbed that.

MRR: What language is the Kleenex song in?

Kyra: German. I can pretend to speak German. I can speak Flemish with a German accent, which kind of passes as speaking German. Quite a few of the Kleenex songs are sung in a made-up language. But the one we do is German. Not Swiss-German, but German.

Julie: We just worked (the lyrics) from listening to it and made it up. But apparently it *is* correct – we do the correct lyrics!

MRR: I love how on some A-Lines songs the lyrics suddenly switch into Flemish. How do you decide when the lyrics should change from English to Flemish?

Kyra: When we get stuck!

Julie: I really like it. I'd like to do it all the time.

MRR: It gives the songs a mysterious quality. And you can respond to a song without necessarily understanding the lyrics.

Kyra: When you can just hear the language and it's a bunch of sounds, somehow the emotions filter through even though even though you can't understand the words as such, it filters through. The emotions.

MRR: The song "Four" switches into Flemish mid-way through.

Julie: We thought, we can't keep singing the same lyric over and over! Do it in Flemish! The song just keeps repeating. At least do it in Flemish!

Kyra: I initially thought surely everyone's just going to walk out and not be interested because they can't understand what the songs say, but nobody's left so far. Maybe it means they don't really care anyway! But then we do see people singing along with the Flemish lyrics.

Julie: They think they know! You see them mouthing along!

Kyra: We see people singing along with the Flemish lyrics!

MRR: *(To Julie):* Tell me about your previous band in Seattle, The Stuck-Ups.

Julie: The Stuck-Ups were my first band. I was in The Stuck-Ups for two and a half years, but the girls have been going for ages and ages and they're still doing a variety of things. The Stuck-Ups went through a variety of incarnations. Before they became The Stuck-Ups they were The Sad Girls. I filled in for the drummer at the last Sad Girls show and they were trying to do something else, which became The Stuck-Ups. I didn't joint The Stuck-Ups at that point. I just filled in occasionally. Then they lost their drummer and so I became one of The Stuck-Ups. The guitarist Tiffany, she used to be in a band called Penis Envy. When I got married and moved here, they carried on with other people. They went through line-up after line-up. They added a keyboard, and another guitarist and it all went really up the spout. But they're back to just three girls doing punk rock again. There was one glorious burst of a Stuck-Ups record, which is the one I drum on, shall I just say! It's very bratty, very ... *immature!* It came out on Sympathy for The Record Industry *(in 2001).* Their next one came out on Sympathy, as well: *Human Doll Express (in 2002).* I'd love for The A-Lines to do a split single with The Stuck-Ups. And I'd love to do some stuff again with Tiffany. There's been some talk of some girls getting together and re-doing some Buff Medways songs. I'll definitely have to get Tiffany in on that!

MRR: How much of a culture shock was it moving from Seattle to Chatham?

Julie: My mother used to live in North Kent —

Ramsgate. So I've visited it quite a lot, but it doesn't actually prepare you for the trauma! When you move to a town like Chatham after a town like Seattle, it's hard. It's *really* hard. I've met lots of really nice people, but I still have moments when I walk down the street and think, am I in Bedrock? Where is Fred Flintstone? Who *are* these cave people? But not so much anymore. I come to London a couple of times a week because I study dance. I do ballet.

MRR: *(To Kyra):* How does having a kid change things for you, being in a band? *(Kyra and Billy, who were previously in a relationship, had a child together, Huddie, who's now four years old).*

Kyra: I thought becoming a mom, I'd suddenly turn into a different person and I haven't. I think I'm more or less the same. I mean, I haven't had any proper sleep for about four years, but apart from that! Do you think I've changed, Debs?

Debbie: Not at all. I don't think so.

Kyra: Right answer!

Debbie: You're different obviously when Huddie's around, because you have to.

Kyra: I think I'm in different modes. When I'm with Huddie I'm with Huddie and that's what I do. And when I get in the car and drive to a gig, that's what I do. For a few years it was really hard. (Being in a band) just wasn't compatible at all. We don't go on any long extended tours and there are certain things I don't want to do, but apart from that it's absolutely fine.

MRR: Where does the name Huddie come from?

Kyra: He's named after the blues singer Leadbelly. Supposedly "Huddie" was Leadbelly's first name: Huddie Leadbetter. But recently I read somewhere that that name was made up as well! But he is a real little Huddie.

MRR: Does he like your music?

Kyra: I never listen to our music (at home). He loves all kinds of music. He loves the Ramones. He loves Indian music, and a little bit of piano music. He loves dancing. Like any kid. Children love music. It comes very instinctual to them. And he's always grown up with people around him who make music and go off and do gigs. I think for him it's quite normal. There's nothing romantic and mystical about it. He still gets upset when I leave, though!

Debbie: I can't wait for him to come to one of our gigs.

MRR: What is "More Wax" about? The lyrics are so cryptic.

Kyra: It's about going to play groups. It's about trying to meet other moms. Going to these places that are totally new to me, where people take their kids and drink coffee and moan about their husbands and the kids play with broken plastic toys in the middle of the room. And I felt very alienated and weird at that time. I was on my own and my life had really changed. I guess that's what that is about. And the "More Wax" bit — I don't really know where that came from. I think hair removal! I can't quite marry the hair removal and play group bits together!

(Currently playing in four bands, bassist Delia is the hardest workingwoman in show business. I ask how she crams it in).

Delia: I'd rather play a gig than go to a gig. I'd rather play a gig than go to a party. I'd rather play a gig than go on holiday. I'd rather play a gig than anything. Priorities. It's what your priorities are. I know people who quit their band when they get a boyfriend or a girlfriend. They'd rather go to movies or stay in and watch *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?* I'd rather be in bands.

MRR: What do you make of the current garage punk scene? For a while the mainstream press (like the reliably clueless *NME*) was calling *all* guitar bands "garage punk". One of the things wanted to ask you, because you're all garage punk veterans ...

Julie: I'm not!

MRR: Well, *punk* veterans, then ...

Delia: Where's our medals?

MRR: What did you make of the garage punk "explosion" in the mainstream last year, post-White Stripes, etc?

Delia: Loads of shits bands who were playing post-rock or whatever was trendy two or three years ago suddenly decided to play shit garage punk instead. There's still a good hardcore of good bands you can go to and see at the venues that've always put them on (i.e., the Dirty Water club). There are some young 'uns who get excited by it and start playing (their own bands), but there's also been a tidal wave of shit that's put down as punk instead of whatever was trendy two or three years ago. But it'll go away in another few months and we'll be left with the same venues and the same bands there already were.

Julie: They'll do folk! Folk will be the new punk, the new garage.

MRR: A lot of the bands lumped together as "garage punk" were actually post-Led Zeppelin or post-AC/DC heavy metal.

Delia: A lot of the bands getting called "garage" are actually grunge.

Kyra: To me it sounds like boys who've listened to an awful lot of Status Quo. And there's nothing wrong with that. But call it by its name.

MRR: On a happier note, it feels like there is a healthy girl band scene at the moment. Here in London we have you, The Priscillas, The Schla La Las, and The Dirty Burds. And recently there's been the aboveground success of The 5,6,7,8's.

Delia: *(Warily, then warming to her theme).* Do you think so? There have always been girl bands around. What I like even better is there are more female promoters around working behind the scenes. Sometimes with girl bands you get put on bills with other girl bands and you've got nothing in common with them apart from the fact you're in a girl band. I was talking about starting a new genre and calling it "tit pop". It's a way for promoters to tie your band in with another girl band without having to worry about the fact that you're totally ...

Kyra: Incompatible.

Delia: Exactly. I really, really like what The Priscillas do, but they get put on the bill a lot with one of my other bands, The Schla La Las, and they're totally different. It's like The Ramones and The Beatles or something. Hmmm. I think that's quite a good comparison! But then it's fun playing with other all-girl bands, so I'm shooting myself in the foot there. I think there should just be more girls in music in general. It shouldn't be a special thing.

(Conversation turns to the mainstream buzz surrounding The 5,6,7,8's, whom both The A-Lines and before that Thee Headcoatees have performed with).

Delia: The 5,6,7,8's have been going for years. They've always been appreciated, but not at the level they are now. They're about as tight as you can get. The drummer is amazing. We're playing with them on Sunday.

Kyra: We (Thee Headcoatees) played with them in Japan.

MRR: And they haven't changed remotely. Just the perception of them changed.

Delia: It took one person to declare them cool and trendy. And people would have liked them all along anyway, but they never thought of it until Quentin Tarantino, who always has cool bands in his movies. So has anyone sent one of our CDs to Quentin Tarantino?

MRR: I think my favourite A-Lines song is "Sideways" *(a panicked punk rant, with Kyra shrieking "Beg on your knees / Crawl on your hands!" in Siouxsie-like wail).*

Kyra: That's just a really dirty, *dirty* song! I can't tell you about that!

Delia: Is it rude?

Kyra: It's so rude and so dirty I don't want to talk about it.

Delia: Is it about parallel parking?

MRR: I think we've pretty much covered it. Is there anything else you want to talk about?

Delia: We'd like to play Japan. We'd like to play America. We'd like to play Australia. Sort it out!

Find out more about The A-Lines and contact them via their website: www.thealines.com

INSURGENCE RECORDS

The following interview with Toronto Canada's Insurgence Records was conducted in January of this year by the German webzine *Underground Network*. Insurgence Records is a passionately leftist and anti-fascist label, home to such streetpunk/skinhead stalwarts as England's ANGELIC UPSTARTS, France's BRIGADA FLORES MAGON and Germany's STAGE BOTTLES. It's also home to some newer and equally hard-hitting and hard-thinking outfits like Canada's CLASS ASSASSINS, FATE2HATE and the U.S.'s FIGHTING CHANCE.

MRR: Have you had any arguments with fascists? Do you get a lot of hate mail?

IR: Cutting straight to the chase, eh? Ok. First off, hate mail and other internet-related nonsense is never a problem, especially from those who would rather not confront us face-to-face. We're seeing a lot of younger types these days in the world of skinhead and hardcore music that probably spend way too much time behind their keyboards. Things are done very differently in the real world, so we have a policy of not responding to that Internet crap. But with that said, the existence of fascism in this subculture is certainly problematic. Many of our critics maintain that we're instigating the problem by being political. Some go as far as suggesting we are using skinhead as a political recruitment tool! If fascist skinheads didn't exist, would we still be producing skinhead music from this end of the spectrum? Damn right we would! The reality is that fascism is a problem in this subculture and there are only two responses to that: Address the problem or ignore it. Both of these are conscious political decisions.

MRR: You are also a publisher. Tell us about that.

IR: To date, we've sponsored the production of a booklet entitled *The Militant Tradition—Commemorating Canadian Volunteers of the International Brigades*, which is a small and concise reader on North American involvement in the Spanish Civil War. We have a couple of videos in the publishing catalog as well. At the moment, we're sticking to what we do best—music. But that's not to say something other than that won't be issued in the future.

MRR: What kind of bands do you look for? Do they have to be political?

IR: It's been a very natural process. Our bands have gravitated to us as we have done to them. They are as committed to producing quality music as they are to their lyrics and activities outside of their respective bands. When Insurgence started out, we initially wanted to promote skinhead and hardcore bands that had something worthwhile to say. They had to sound good as well! This wasn't difficult, seeing as there were many decent bands in our midst that weren't getting any support or recognition for their efforts. We began showcasing a few imports that we thought stood out in terms of their antifascist stance and this got a positive response from the people that mattered to us. Our trials, errors and successes have provided us with the foundation on which to finally begin fielding for North American talent, which is where we're focusing now. The newer bands usually approach us first because they've heard what we're about. And honestly, there's no one else around that does what we do. There are some noteworthy streetpunk labels and bands that conduct some amazing product, but they're not us. And I think people recognize and respect that. By the same token, we try to work with a lot of broader initiatives because we are mainly here to promote the traditional values of this subculture. Nowhere does it state or is it inferred that our bands must be political in order to get on side with us. On the other hand, it doesn't make sense for us to support a band that says 'no politics' because that would mean they're inherently saying no to us! Reactionaries in the skinhead scene vent a lot of (political?) steam trying to convince folks that we are as much a cancer in the scene as the fascists. If we're guilty of anything, its quite possible that we tend to inspire some degree of polarization in the areas we effect. But when it comes down to boneheads storming your gigs, it's important to know who's got your back when the shit hits the fan. I guess it's not as important for the people who turn tail and run.

MRR: How did the compilation CD come about and what has the feedback been like?

IR: The *Class Pride World Wide* series has had amazing feedback! When we started the label out, bringing in mostly imported material, these comps were initially the only products that were totally produced under our direction. Our aim was to deliver a resounding fuck-off salute to the pricks that came up with the *White Pride World Wide* compilations, which truth be told, are musically shoddy inferiors, never mind the politics! You may or may not notice that the artwork for our compilations is modeled after Spanish Civil War posters circa 1936-39. We've made a conscious decision to incorporate this theme (see our label logo for example) as a reply to all those ridiculous fascist skinhead bands that make liberal use of the World War imagery and such. We deemed it appropriate for the label to counteract this nationalist mythology with an example on class terms that actually fought tooth and nail against this. It's made a tangible impact in terms of weaning kids off of these false notions and has at least keyed them into the existence of a real alternative. By the time the second *Class Pride* compilation came out, you began to see a few bands on it from this side of the world that are now featured on our label. The whole project has been very worthwhile. *Class Pride 3* is currently in the works.

MRR: What do you have planned for the near future?

IR: We have some big plans for the coming years. The next main event we have coming up is an east coast Canadian tour for The Stage Bottles to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of RASH. Fighting Chance (Baltimore) and Fate 2 Hate (Montreal), two bands that have full-lengths coming out on Insurgence, will be supporting The Stage Bottles on this tour. This will be occurring at the beginning of May, so we're looking forward to that. We'll be sending more information about that as we get it in hand.

MRR: Do you all do any political work with any Anti-Fascist political organizations?

IR: We are only a music organization, so our "political work" is limited to fundraising and organizing event security. We work with a fellowship of bands, groups and friends around the country to do this. The anti-racist movement has largely ignored us, I think because we exist in areas where the liberal left is absent. We believe a new left opposition needs to be built, but a record label is certainly no means to do that. It takes many different approaches to make the world go round, however. Some organizations close to our hearts include RASH (Red and Anarchist Skinheads), Anti-Fascist Action, and Class Action.

MRR: Why did you start the label?

IR: I think a lot of that has already been explained, so I don't want to belabor the point too much. Our basic reasoning was to lay down some decent history for our side and have a good time doing so. We've been able to roll back the tide of support for white power music in many areas and offer a true alternative. There's a long way to go in this regard, but we're going from strength to strength. Many independent music labels these days complain about sagging sales and tough times. For us, this will no doubt hold true for the duration. We try to get our product into HMV shops around the country, but we don't suffer sleepless nights if the demand from those customers isn't there. No surprise. Fascist record labels in North America rely completely on an underground network for their sales. If four out of five of our potential sales are going to the likes of this scum, then that's where our sights are set.

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INTERVIEW BY CHRISTIAN ANARCHY WITH DALE BROOKS.

MRR: After 24 years as a band, it's pretty clear that you aren't in it for the money. Being signed to some big greasy music label isn't what you do this for. Has it been worth it? What has that cost you and all of the various band members over the years who've been in the Hates?

The Hates: Our music and our band have been the best antidote for this insane, modern world. Playing is our reason d'être. Often, a Hates holiday results in a shiny, new recording. The Hates play to our fans whoever they are or whenever they get around to finding us. A live audience of twelve or twelve hundred gets the same show! We've kept our day jobs to stay financially solvent, though we do lose money on our now-yearly recordings

MRR: The older I get, the more I realize that what makes for a great band is great songwriting. Hate songs are written for an orchestra of three, so how does the music come into existence? Are there songs you've made that you decided suck, so you didn't record them or play them live? Do you know when a song is brilliant?

The Hates: Some songs that we predict to be masterworks often pale compared to an orphan that just blossoms in the studio. We frequently wake a two-decade-old tune from slumber, slap on a new coat of attitude, an updated guitar solo, and some extended lyrics and viola—a fresh, middle-aged spin on what was teen angst.

MRR: Time passes. Were you angry in 1978? Are you still angry? Is anger a piece of the Hates and is it part of punk? Can we age and still be punk?

The Hates: The punk lifestyle transcends all ages and has nothing directly to do with anger and everything to do with attitude and not being a sheep! I can imagine grandparents with tattoos and Mohawks entertaining the leatherbrats with wild adventure stories about the Sex Pistols and other punk heroes!

MRR: OK, OK, what's with the name? Sounds like a classic punk name to me.

The Hates: The name is a literary reference to George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and the reference in the opening chapter to the "Two-Minute Hate." Our first vinyl record was *No Talk in the Eighties!*

MRR: How come the band still exists after 24 years? Did you ever break up? How many guys have been in the Hates?

The Hates: The Hates have broken up several times, and this is the Mark VII edition of our band that will be touring. There are about a dozen Ex-Hates.

MRR: How have your families responded to you being punx all these years?

The Hates: Our families have long-accepted the spiky hair and dress, but really know little about the music.

MRR: Most old punx know of the Hates, particularly those 3 great 7"s from 1979. The music is a touch slower on them than I'm used to, but when I hear those records, they still sound great.

The Hates: Thank you. The music was deliberately paced that way so Hates could launch into a thrash number like, "What Am I Living For?" Compare the Sex Pistols' plodding 4/4 beat with today's speed punk. The Pistols are like Punk Mozarts!

MRR: What songs do you play live over the years? Are there some you always play and some you never do?

The Hates: Some songs seem to fit the time and a few are a bit dated, but each Hates number is in a slow orbital rotation that brings each one in turn back to the front.

MRR: The German BANG!-released Hates CD has what I consider to be your five best releases, three 1979 7"s, the PANACEA 12"—which was, thankfully, remastered—and, what I consider to be your masterpiece, *New World Oi!* a 15-song tape from 1992. How'd that release happen? How many CDs were pressed? Can you go over the Hates discography, with how many of each release was pressed, and why you chose vinyl, tape, or CD for each one?

The Hates: *New World Oi!* was recorded and mixed on two successive weekends at the Millipede studio in Austin, Texas, owned by Ex-Hate member, Paul Minot. We had just digitally remastered all the Mark I through Mark V Hates releases for the German CD in Austin, and we went on to do two more cassette releases and our anniversary CD. There were only

1000 copies of each. Please visit our exhaustive web site at www.thehates.com for our updated discography, including comp releases and special projects.

MRR: Are there Hates videos?

The Hates: The Hates video, *Science's Fiction,* won an award at the 1984 Houston International Film Festival and also aired on MTV's Basement Tapes in 1986. We have over a dozen videos, dating back to 1978, with more to come.

MRR: The Hates have had a historical lack of touring for a thriving live punk band. Have you, consequently, built a following in Houston? Have any punx brought their kids to your shows? Are the punx's kids getting old enough to dig The Hates?

The Hates: Some Hates fans bring their children and some bring their parents to share the thrill of discovery. Admittedly, we've concentrated mainly on our studio legacy, but live gigs are what we live for.

MRR: What do you guys listen to? What shows have you seen over the years that you liked the best?

The Hates: Year Zero in punk will always be 1977, and those who worship at the alter of The Damned, The Sex Pistols, The Clash, Ramones, 999, Buzzcocks, et al, know well the sardonic melodies and rapier wit of so-called "old school" punk. We've been fortunate to see each one of these bands live on two or more occasions.

MRR: I'm voluntarily workin' on your January 2004 tour for 10 cities, from Houston to San Diego and San Francisco. Are you guys gonna suck? Is your live set different today than it was 20 years ago; are you guys older and so you have less energy, or are you tighter? Are you tired old punx who are just doin' it now for the fame, fortune, recognition, and to avoid having to face the wife?

The Hates: Come see us and find out for yourself!

MRR: When you die will you just cease to be or will you continue to exist? Is there anything to that question except belief?

The Hates: Darby Crash and Sid Vicious haven't done much in the last few years, but their recorded legacy insures that in some way; they'll live on in stereo.

MRR: What's more important to you, lyrics, or music?

The Hates: One cannot help but reinforce the other. It's the greatest honor to see our lyrics being mouthed by a punk one-third our ages.

MRR: Does being a good husband, parent, or son match up to being a good musician or punk?

The Hates: Punk rock's satiric commentary meshes seamlessly with a world gone mad and may truly be the only thing actually worth living for!

MRR: What contact have you had with punx around the US and the World? Have you done trades? This life is short, but it seems that the punk ethic pays off big by allowing us to share and trade with each other without worrying about whether our family will have breadsticks on the table!

The Hates: Fans around the world have been so generous. Making a CD is like floating a message in a bottle that somehow finds its way to that one lonely soul whose life is thereafter changed for the better. This is truly humbling to me, that Hates mean so much to our fans, past and future

MRR: Do you break even with your releases and expenses? I know the Hates have added a lot of musical pleasure to *my* life for over 20 years.

The Hates: We are honored by your words. We routinely lose over a thousand dollars a year, but we wouldn't trade the editorial freedom and musical integrity for a sellout's brief "success!"

www.thehates.com

THE KRUNCHIES

Kurrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrunch! Blisteringly fast and loud, the Krunchies are an angry Samoan circle jerk of call-and-answer male/female koo-koo kraziness! Like all the great bands comprising this wave of much-needed raw Chicago rock, The Krunchies are clearly a part of what's going on in the City on the Make while carving out their own niche. Affiliations with war criminal apologist talk show hosts and eccentric British music moguls notwithstanding, The Krunchies are setting their own land speed record, so enjoy their insights on music, food, and shaving cream, then check out their recorded output pronto, brah! You're welcome.

Interview by Ron Cozumel

MRR: Okay, I'm here with the Krunchies. Explain the origin of your name.

Matt: I don't even know.

Amanda: It's so stupid, it's not even worth explaining, but... at the Pizza Hut salad bar, I used to call the chow mein noodles krunchies, and when I told Kevin, he was like, "that would be a good band name!" We just decided to keep it even though it's terrible.

MRR: You should change your name to the Chow Mein Noodles.

Matt: The Chow Meins!

Kevin: Yeah, that would be a better name. I screwed up by suggesting the Krunchies as a band name. It's a dumb name, but it's too late to change it now.

MRR: What else would you be called?

Kevin: Um, what was the original one you thought of, Amanda?

Amanda: Cats Chewing On Curtains. (laughter)

MRR: That sounds a little too high concept.

Matt: Or like a junkie band. (laughter)

MRR: What is the overarching goal of your band?

Matt: Just rock.

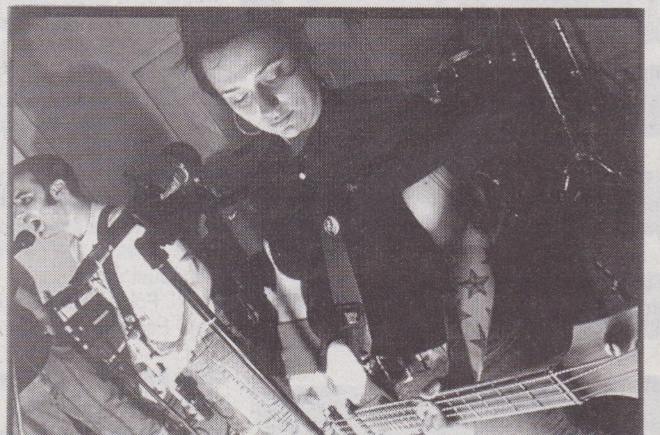
Kevin: For me, there really is no goal. Just playing and having fun.

Matt: I set up two goals for before the band breaks up. Tour Japan and play on a parade float.

MRR: Any particular parade?

Matt: No. Any parade.

Kevin: You know, I love a parade.
Amanda: I wish we could just have a parade for no reason. "We're gonna have a parade on Saturday." Like it's just a party or something. My goal is to make it big, be on MTV, and show everyone in high school that I can do something with myself. (laughter) No, I just want to have fun and have people think I'm cool.
MRR: I was just wondering because you don't really write about partying of fucking or anything like that. There's a little bit of politics going on. Are you trying to make people aware or is it just a product of living in 2004 America?
Kevin: Kind of. I'm not really the most political person in the world, but it kinda comes through…
Amanda: We just write about stuff that makes us mad and stuff that we care about. It's not like we do it because we have any sort of agenda. If I tried to write a song about partying, it would just come out really stupid. It would be like, (singing) Dancing with my friends is fun. Kevin: (singing) Drinking lots of beer is fun, too.
MRR: That's catchy.
Amanda: If I have a topic that I can expound on, I'll write something about it, but partying in general…what's there to really say?
Kevin: Honestly, lyrics are usually the last thing we think of. Most of the time, they're just kind of slapped together.
MRR: You grew up here. What are some things about Chicago that fill you with "Chi-pride" that the transplants might not know about?
Matt: Polish sausage.
Kevin: I'd have to say the food.
Amanda: Yeah, for sure.
Matt: And that average guy kind of attitude.
Amanda: When I see a plumber's butt crack, I'm just like, "home." (laughter) I just want to hug them.
Matt: Chicago pizza, Al Capone, Michael Jordan.
Amanda: That's all the things that I like least about Chicago.
MRR: Well, what do you like?
Kevin: Gacy. (laughter) I think we've had three serial killers.
Matt: Wasn't there some really old one on the south side?
Kevin: Yeah, I think that was that guy who owned a sausage factory, killed his wife and then made her into sausage.
Amanda: Now that's Chicago.
Kevin: If it were somewhere else, it probably would have been a different kind of food.
Matt: Chicago is a city that developed really fast and now we're living in the ruins of that. We have all these cool things that are from the past, and I like that sort of stuff. That and the '85 Bears. People who move here don't realize that that was the coolest thing in the world.
Amanda: You just want to put on the "Super Bowl Shuffle" and teach it to everybody.
MRR: Any thoughts or comments on what's happening musically in Chicago?
Kevin: It's awesome. All these bands that have popped up over the last couple of years have just completely blown me away. Amanda: And all the people are just way, way nice. It's funny because most of the nicest people aren't even from here originally. It's like they brought all the fellowship and brotherhood with them when they moved here.
Matt: It's not even just in our scene, either. It's all over the place. There's all these people moving here that are in bands from all over the place. That's another good thing about Chicago, too. It's a city that attracts people to come here. So now there's all these great bands and cool music.
MRR: What bands in particular?
Kevin: Oh man, there's so many. Functional Blackouts, Tyrades, Ponys…
Amanda: Vee Dee, Manhandlers, Baseball Furies, MOTO, Violently Ill…
Kevin: I really like the Worst. Um, Miss Alex White, HotLips Messiah… Amanda: It's hard because once you start trying to list them all, you end up forgetting someone. One band I definitely want to mention is Manaconda. They don't really ever get mentioned and they're really good.
Kevin: Pretty much every band we play with is awesome.
Matt: Yeah, It's such a treat to play with these bands that are so good.
Kevin: And I just want to say that I'm really happy people accept us and like us.
Amanda: It makes me feel special. Everyone who buys our album, I want to email them a hug. "Thank you for being so nice and wanting to buy our music. I love you."
Kevin: Why don't you just really hug them? Don't bring technology into it.
Amanda: Then I'd have to get on a Greyhound and go around the country hugging people. That would be awesome to go on a tour where we just go around hugging people. The Krunchies Hugging Tour.
MRR: The Krunchies Hug America. (laughter)
Amanda: We'd just ring people's doorbells, hug them, and then walk away.
MRR: Any advice for bands playing the Fireside Bowl?
Matt: Don't play a show two weeks before or two weeks after you play there.
Amanda: I don't know. Be afraid. (laughter) I mean, some of the people who work there are really nice and usually the sound people are really good, but it's just such a hassle to get a show there.
Kevin: It's kind of like a monopoly in Chicago, too. It's basically the only all ages venue and it's so hard to book a show there. Personally, I'd like to see more house parties instead of Fireside shows. I just think it's weird that the Fireside is supposed to be this independent punk rock place and they just have so many little rules.
Amanda: And none of the rules are made known to you until you break one.
MRR: Be punk rock, but don't be.
Kevin: Exactly. Also, make sure you don't break the ceiling tiles!
MRR: What inspires you as a band? Influences, day to day shit…
Amanda: I like food.
Kevin: I'd say food is a big part of our band. In terms of our songs, like we said, we're inspired mostly by things that piss us off. Working inspires me because it makes me want to kill myself. Good bands. Fun.
Amanda: Friendship.
Kevin: Alcohol.
Matt: Driving a car.
Amanda: A lot of random things inspire me. "Oh, that's a really cute pair of underwear…I want to practice tonight."
Kevin: TV.
Matt: I always get good ideas in the shower.
Amanda: Yeah! Or when I'm falling asleep. All the support that people give each other is also inspiring.
MRR: You are the houseband for notorious xenophobe Brian Costello and his two-bit talk show. It must really suck working for such a ball busting tyrant.
Kevin: Yes. He's a total homophobe.
Amanda: He almost kicked me off the show because he thought I was gay. He screamed at me "ARE YOU A DYKE!? IF I CATCH YOU KISSING ANY GIRLS, YOU'RE GONE!" He makes us get drinks for him and he throws them in our face if they're not cold enough.
MRR: And the rehearsals. The relentless pursuit of perfection.
Kevin: Eight hours a day. Seven days a week.
Matt: All those procedures. Amanda: Lots of tears and emotional breakdowns.
MRR: How is Criminal IQ Records treating you?
Amanda: Excellent.



Kevin: Darius is a good guy. I would support the label even if we weren't on it.
Matt: It's amazing how much they support us, too. Putting out the 7", a full length…
MRR: Your rent?
Matt: Yeah.
Amanda: You don't pay rent, dude.
Matt: I used to.
MRR: So you have the one 7" EP and a full length record coming out. Any idea when that will be released?
Matt: We're shooting for fall.
MRR: How many songs are on it?
Amanda: Twelve. We're recording at Volume Studios.
Kevin: Twelve songs in under 20 minutes.
MRR: Is there a name for it yet?
Amanda: It's either going to be called *Kinky Cappers* or *In The Winkel.*
MRR: *In The Winkel*?
Kevin: Yeah, Winkel is Dutch for "store" and Kinky Cappers is Dutch for "hip haircut place".
Matt: I was thinking maybe it should be called *No Rocking In The Winkel.* (laughter)
Amanda: Then we could have some Dutch guy wagging his finger at us on the cover.
Kevin: Matt studied abroad in Holland, and he brought all the fun Dutch slang back with him.
MRR: Matt and Amanda, what does being brother/sister do for the band? Does it heighten the arguments? Is it something that comes up very often?
Amanda: We don't argue that much. People rarely believe us when we tell them we're related. It's cool, though, because we used to hate each other and fight a lot when we were growing up and now it's like we're making up for it.
Matt: Now we just fight with our instruments. It helps out with the practice space, too.
Amanda: Yeah, totally. We practice at our dad's house and he's down with it because he used to be in bands. (as her dad) "Those are my kids, they're in a band!"
Kevin: Now we will rule this city!
Amanda: (singing) We built this city on rock and roll.
Kevin: Every night, he says, "I built this family on rock and roll."
Matt: We've known Kevin for long time, so it's like he's a member of the family. Kevin: Aww, jeez. Hugs for everyone.
MRR: Kevin, you were Scrappy Spice in the English Softhearts. What did you learn from being in that band that has helped you today?
Kevin: Not too much. I mean, it was a good experience. I got to play all these big places like Metro and Lounge Ax when I was only 15, 16 years old. I guess I learned the etiquette of being in a band that plays a lot of shows.
MRR: When you shave, are you with the grain or against it?
Amanda: I go against it. It's easier.
Kevin: I go with the grain. I tend to be clumsy, and when I go against the grain I end up cutting the shit out of my face.
Matt: I go with the grain on the top of my face and against the grain on the bottom.
MRR: How often do you shave?
Kevin: When it gets out of control and I start to itch. I'm really lazy, so it's usually like once a week.
Matt: Once a week for me. If I had a real job, I'd probably do it every day.
MRR: What brand of shaving lotion do you use?
Kevin: Whatever is the cheapest.
Amanda: I use Edge. I don't like the girlie shaving creams because they're not as thick and they smell too perfume-y. Even after you shave and shower you smell like sunflowers.
Kevin: I don't like creams, I like the gels.
Amanda: In a pinch, I use conditioner. Little known fact, if you run out of shaving cream, you can substitute it with conditioner.
MRR: Even on your face?
Amanda: Yeah.
Kevin: I use Daisy razors exclusively, the pink ones. They're just more gentle.
MRR: Better not tell Costello that.
Amanda: You'd be fired in an instant.
MRR: What is your favorite lesser know SST Records band?
Amanda: I'll go with Black Flag. Nobody really knows who they are. Especially not those mall punk kids.
Kevin: Any number of Greg Ginn solo projects.
Amanda: Wait, I'm gonna go with the Descendents. No one has ever heard of them.
MRR: What do you think is the funniest cereal?
Amanda: I like all the generic ones.
Matt: Like Fruity Loops.
Kevin: Cini-mini Crunch. Isn't there a cereal called King Vitamin? That's pretty funny.
Amanda: There's all those dumb women-specific cereals. What, do they have estrogen in them? And they all have names like Good Friends and Harmony.
MRR: Any final messages to your fans worldwide?
Kevin: Eat a bag of dicks, motherfuckers! (laughter)
Amanda: Thanks for being friends. Buy our record even though we sound stupid in this interview. Don't let that discourage you.
Kevin: Don't break the ceiling tiles at the Fireside Bowl. Seriously, thanks for digging us. We're awesome!
Contact: thekrunchies@hotmail.com

RAMBO

Welcome to the Rambo Australian/Asian 2004 tour diary. In February, March, and April of 2004 we toured Australia, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan, and Hong Kong. So how does one find themselves touring these far- off locales? The wonderful combination of MRR and the internet.

Australia and Japan's economies and access to information is about the same as that in Western Europe, the USA, and Canada, so it works pretty similarly. They just have to pay more for the importation of our crap. In Southeast Asia, however, the economies just don't allow most punks to afford Western-pressed records. Kids hear about bands from reviews and columns in MRR and on the internet, but they can't afford to buy the records themselves. Often one person will buy a record and tape it for their friends. In order to make Western records accessible; kids will do local tape and CD pressings. We were contacted by Falda of Time Up Records and then Ahmad of ASAS distro (asas@excite.com) in Malaysia who asked if they could do tape releases in their countries, so our music could be made affordable. Of course, we were down, but we added, "Yeah, you can do a tape, but if you want those songs played in person, we can arrange that, too!"

Unfortunately, a couple kids in Malaysia and Indonesia ripped off some distros with stolen credit cards and created a bad reputation for those countries. Kids in those countries are very upset about this false reputation. We were aware of these rumors and were a little nervous about committing to a tour with strangers. Ahmad said he was involved with setting up the Code 13 tour. We asked Felix about him and he gave him the highest props. Now we had an anchor for that region. The Southeast Asia DIY community is very tight, so Ahmad could recommend people in other countries to us who were reliable, such as Faisal from Homegrown Records in Singapore and Ari from Domestik Doctrine

Adelaide, Australia

AUSTRALIA

We arrived in Adelaide with no problems. After a bit of poking around and questioning, we got through customs and met Tom, who booked our shows in Adelaide. Tom took us to his home, which just so happens to be on the beach. His roommate is a marine biologist and surfer. In the backyard, there is a BMX dirt jump track and chickens—*chooks. This house fucking rules!*

We had two days before our first show, so we did lots of swimming, got sunburns, snorkeled, and Tom busted out the grill and had an Australian-style vegan barbecue. This is where we first met Lex, who was with us for the whole tour, and Emily Jans, who helped set up the tour and came with us for most of our time there.

Australia is about the size of the lower 48 states in the US, but only has about 20 million people compared to almost 300 million in the US. Most of the population is concentrated on the southeast coast around four major cities: Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, and Brisbane, with an average of a nine-hour drive between each city. The other major cities, Perth and Darwin, are several days drive away to the east and north respectively. Only big bands play there because you have to fly. Shows are mostly on the weekend and you play the same city two or three times. Sometimes shows have to be 18-plus, so a band will play that and an all-ages one to compensate.

We played horribly at our first show and Andy's guitar broke. The next show, however, made up for it. Tom had the brilliant idea of doing a guerilla show at an outdoor skate park. It started just after a big club show down the street had ended. The Aussies were laughing at us for being all worried about the cops. They never showed and we played a great set and had so much fun.

While we were in Adelaide, we jumped off a giant pier into the ocean. Tony has no depth perception, so he had no idea how far he was jumping. Thus, he was scared shitless, much to Andy's delight. There are lots of sharks in Australia, especially in the south coast where we were. There were fish guts on the ladder we climbed up, and Mike saw people who were fishing lowering a bucket of bloody meat—*chum*—into the water. Luckily, we didn't die.

Since we had a few days to get to Melbourne—pronounced "Melbin"—Tom took us to the Grampians Mountains, where Tony got to go crazy bird watching. One night we got to see kangaroos fighting! They were leaning back on their tails and kicking and punching each other like old guys in pinstripe suites.

On the way to Melbourne, Tom's stomach was feeling bad so he decided to take some Australian medicine: Coke and a candy bar. Bull suggested he has some miso soup or ginger tea, but Tom insisted on the Australian remedy. Tom spent the next few hours puking his guts out and making the worst noises ever. This is captured forever on video, of course.

We stayed at the Pink Palace Warehouse in Melbourne, home to Emily and Dave from Gash. Emily has a sister, Sarah, and they were some of the funniest foul-mouthed amazing people we've ever met. They also got us aquatinted with the Australian love affair with the word "cunt". Of course, Rambo, being the most p.c. band ever, was appalled and offended at everybody dropping the c-bomb, but eventually we grew to accept it. Emily used the c-bomb to refer to people she hated, to people she loved, to emus, to a dysfunctional crosswalk button.

We played three shows in Melbourne. One was at the Missing Link record store. The other two were Far Left Limit's last shows. One was at a rad club; the other was at the Pink Palace. Since it

AUSTRALIAN / SE ASIA TOUR 2004

TOUR DIARY BY BULL AND TONY POINTLESS

(ernestokore55@blg.centrin.net.id) in Indonesia. Reliable wasn't the word for it! Every person who we worked with in Southeast Asia—and the whole tour for that matter—was unbelievable. We were treated well, the shows were well done and organized, and the releases looked and sounded great. We were shown some of the best times of our lives!

Tony had been to Thailand on his own a year before and met some kids there. They got him in contact with Chris from Elephant Eye Records (www.elephanteyerecords.com). In Hong Kong, our friend Pranjal, who went to school in Philly and staffed the Wooden Shoe anarchist bookstore with some of us, introduced us to Rizz from King Lychee. We didn't expect to go to Japan until Tony met D.S.B. when they were in Philly. They hooked us up with two shows in Japan. We played some shows with the Headless Horsemen in Europe and Dave from Gash Records was over there with them so he put Australia on lockdown for us.

Tony's sister is a travel agent and she looked into package deal tickets for us. Cathay Pacific, based out of Hong Kong, offers the "All Asia Pass". This enabled us to fly unlimited flights in Asia for 20 days for $999. We had to extend it to 60 days and pay a $500 extension for Australia, plus departure taxes, so it cost us $2,054 each.

We left Philadelphia on February 15th for J.F.K. airport in New York City. It was below freezing and miserable. About 20 hours later we landed in tropical Hong Kong where it was 85 degrees. Pranjal met us at the airport and took us to his home where his mother made us the best Indian food we have ever eaten. 15 1/2 hours later we'd be back in the air for the red eye to Australia. Pranjal showed us around Hong Kong. Mike had to go to the New Trend Plaza because it was featured in the movie Bio-Zombie. We ate about 15 more times.

was F.L.L.'s last shows, people came from all over Australia. Those shows were crazy! F.L.L. was one of the best bands we'd ever seen. They have that playing so fast it seems like it's all gonna fall apart but never does thing down. Dave plays guitar and Max, who was drumming for the Headless Horsemen when they were in Europe, plays drums. It was great to see our bros laying it down on their home turf.

For the Pink Palace show, we went all out on props. We built Ned Kelly armor for about twenty people. Ned Kelly is an Australian folk hero who, with his gang, robbed banks without killing any civilians, wore homemade armor and killed a few cops. We also built riot police uniforms, a tank out of a shopping cart and a road warrior vehicle out of another. We all dressed up in *Mad Max* outfits. Tony was Lord Humongous. He was supposed to ride out in the *Road Warrior* shopping cart but it tipped over as it came out the door. He had to be pulled from the wreckage and onto the stage. The show was fucking crazy and there was a dance party afterwards. Melbourne was incredible! It felt like home.

Through some weird Australian Mafia connection, the Jans sisters have a house on Phillip Island. So, we stayed two nights on an awesome island.

We also played a show in Canberra. The highlight there was Dave, our host for the evening. He was full of interesting stories and he was the smartest crusty anarchist theorist we'd ever met. We played at Maggotville in Sydney and watched the *Mad Max* trilogy while there. In Hornsby, Emily played drums on our last song. Wollongong was fucking great! Dave, Emily, Bridget, and Lex played part of one of our songs while we circle pitted. There was a sweet BBQ outside the show. Afterwards, about twenty of us went swimming at a rock pool. Then a dance party ensued back at the house. Many new friends were made there. The next day we went swimming in a rain forest stream, had another BBQ, did handstands and had some good conversations. We camped on the beach on the way to Lismore. There we saw a kookaburra. An emu ran past Bull and Mike while they were walking around Bundjalung National Park. Andy stepped on a stingray in Byron Bay. The Lismore show was at a weird bar with *pokies*—slot machines. We stopped in Nimbin on the way to Brisbane. This small mountain town provided us with considerably more fuel for the punks versus hippies fire. The town sported a sad display of burnouts and weed-obsessed creepy dudes. We continued on to Brisbane without delay, where we stayed at a great group house for about a week, and played a fantastic show at a community center with Draft Dodger at a grass-bowling center. While there we had two parties, went to Mount Glorious and the beach, climbed up and in a giant fig tree, played a lot of cards, did a lot of hanging out and read about artichokes.

Shows in Australia aren't much different than shows in the US. What makes Australia different is how amazing the kids are and the natural beauty of the country. We all want to move there. We met many great people, swam somewhere every other day, saw beautiful flora and fauna, Tony saw over one hundred species of birds, and there were huge ass spiders everywhere.

Not enough DIY bands come to Australia. It is far and very expensive to go to, but on every level it is amazing, and totally worth it at all costs.

We left Australia March 18th and flew to Thailand. We had an overnight in Hong Kong on the way, which was convenient to eat some more of Ms. Tiwari's cooking and leave our guitars and

Kuala Lumpor

Bangkok Punks

excess gear at Pranjal's house.

THAILAND

Yos organized our shows in Thailand. He met us at the airport along with some friends. We took cabs to his partner's house, which was a super nice place. It had a shower that opened to the sky. This is where we first got aquatinted with the ass hose. Fuck toilet paper! Imagine a kitchen sink dish sprayer next to the toilet...for your ass! Actually, most toilets in South East Asia are the squat kind.

There was a day off before the show, so we went and did what you have to do in Thailand, we ate like bastards. Can you believe that in Thailand they have Thai food everywhere! A meal there costs about two dollars. Thus, we ate five meals a day. There is every imaginable fruit you'd ever want to eat, pad Thai and spring roll carts and unbelievable vegetarian restaurants. We even got Thai massages (no happy endings). Went to the grand palace and Wat Pho to see the gigantic gold reclining Buddha and saw a Muay Thai match. There we saw fifteen-year-olds kicking the shit out of each other. The whole stadium was wooden with a corrugated tin roof and there was live traditional music during the fights.

We went to Khao San road, which is the backpacker hangout strip. This is the spot to find cheap stuff for your parents and significant others. It's also the place to buy bootleg CDs, especially the stuff you don't want to pay for. Members of Rambo definitely bought discs by Linkin Park, Staind, Pink, Tatu, and Evanescence.

We played two shows both in Bangkok with some good bands. The first show was at The Rock Pub. It had a castle façade. One of the bands we played with was a Victory Records-style chugga holocaust with sixteen-year-olds. Tough guy hardcore and grind seem to be the most popular styles of underground music globally. The kids went ballistic for our set. It was so much fun. Afterwards we sat on the front steps surrounded by the spikiest of punks, signed autograph and took pictures with people. It was a little weird at first, but I think it was more of a thing to remember the show by than a rock 'n' roll, treating us as if we were somehow more important because we were in a band. This wound up being the norm for every show we played in Southeast Asia.

The first time Bull encountered this, a while back when he was on tour in Europe, he tried to explain why he thought asking for autographs went against punk ethics. Sometimes that approach was successful; usually it was lost in the language barrier. The back-up plan became to ask them for their autographs, too. This often just confuses people, but made me feel a little better. Then, finally, I decided that if nothing else works, or there isn't enough time to talk to everyone, it's just best to give it to them the autographs they want because they'll think you're an asshole rock star otherwise.

At the show, we finally got to meet Chris, who put out our CD in Thailand. It was an actual pressed CD release, one of the first of its kind in the Thai punk scene. Chris and Yos were incredible hosts and did an amazing job with the shows, CDs, and shirts. They put out a lot of personal money to make this all happen. We had a wonderful time with them.

The next day we played at another bar. There were some more cool bands and we had a great time. From the Maker of Casablanca played that show. They were a good Polyvinyl/Jade Tree-type indie band.

We had a few days off before we left so we took a trip to Khao Yai National Park. We stayed at the Green Leaf guesthouse that also provided guided tours of the park. The night we got there, we went to a cave that had served as a Buddhist. Then we went on a quick walk through the forest to a big limestone outcrop that at dusk two million bats fly out of in one big snake-like stream. There was a hawk called a *Shikra*—not to be confused with *Shakira*—and two falcons picking off the bats.

The next day we woke up early, had some fresh fruit and miso, and went on the tour. There were three Thai guides. One was called the Birdman, and was he ever! We'd be driving along and he'd stop the truck and run out slam down his telescope and, behold, there would be some bird that you had no idea how he managed to spot with the eyepiece. We saw hornbills, which look like turkey-sized toucans with a horn-like projection growing off the top of the bill. We also saw about fifty other birds, two kinds of deer, monkeys, a python, gibbons (the smallest ape), a water monitor lizard (the second largest lizard in the world) and a fucking spitting cobra!

While the one guy was the Birdman, the other guy was the Wild Man. He would poke at the water monitor lizard, which was eight feet long, with a stick. He grabbed the python by the tail to move it out of the road. He tried to grab the cobra, but luckily, Birdman talked him out of it. Although we didn't see any, the park had signs warning of wild elephants and tigers. We did see gigantic piles of elephant shit at the base of the strangler fig that we climbed up and inside of.

That night we took the bus back to Bangkok to fly out the next day. From the bus, we saw a guy walking a young elephant with a blinking bicycle light on its tail.

MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE

We arrived at the airport in Kuala Lumpur the next evening. The Fast Game kids picked us up and took us out to eat. Apparently, there is no

Hindu Temple, Indonesia

Malaysian food vegans can eat, so we ate Indian food every day. Later, we were taken to Ahmed's house, which his grandfather built, where he lives with his mother and sister. Unfortunately, the city plans to knock it down in order to widen the highway out front. They're not giving them enough to buy a new house, so Ahmed has been working his ass off to buy another house in the same neighborhood, where his family has been for several generations.

We spent the next day sightseeing around Kuala Lumpur. We went to a beautiful waterfall in the jungle. There, we saw women swimming fully covered with veils from head to foot.

Malaysia is a Muslim nation. Some of the states have very strict laws. For example, there are separate public spaces for men and women and all women must wear birkas, whether they consider themselves Muslim or not. In Malaysia, if you are Malay you are considered Muslim. There are large Indian and Chinese populations that are not subject to Muslim laws, but if you are a Malay, even if you do not personally consider yourself Muslim, you are still subject to Muslim laws. It seemed that some of the punks were atheists, but also some who were so Muslim they wouldn't even eat mock pork!

Our show in Singapore was the day before our show in Kuala Lumpur, so we took a five-hour bus ride there, then came back the next night. About midway there, we stopped at a rest-stop type place where we sat together. Paul ate corn ice cream, Bull drank a hot brown rice beverage and we all listened to the Red Hot Chili Peppers play over the radio. It was a beautiful moment.

Our guide was Rudy, a total grindcore fanatic and the nicest person ever. We arrived in Singapore—which looks like an immaculate Miami—and were met by Faisal, who organized our show. Although the majority of the kids we met in SE Asia spoke some English (and some were fluent), in Singapore it is the national language. It was great to hang out with Faisal, who was extremely funny with his sarcastic wit.

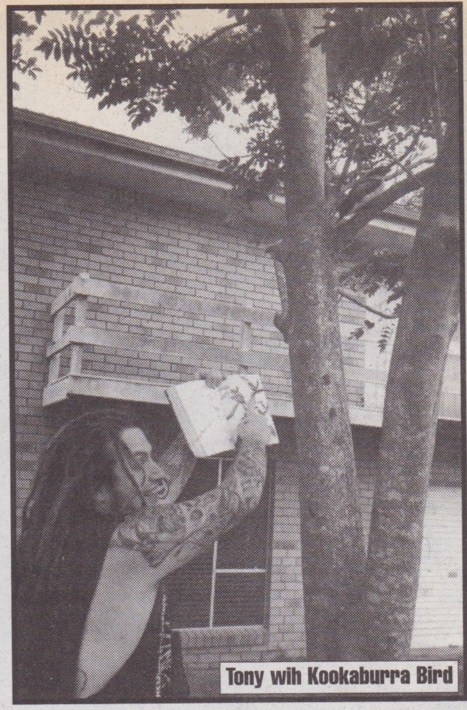
We played on the 7th floor of a youth center. The center was on the same block as the police station. At one point a cop stopped by to complain that the music was so loud they couldn't hear people on the phone that were calling them. The show was fun and full of energy and there were great bands, including Secret 7 and My Precious.

Singapore is mostly Chinese, even though it's only an island that you walk across a bridge from Malaysia to get to. The Malays there, only form a small minority; however, the punk scene is mostly Malay, which was quite a departure from the States, where minorities are underrepresented in punk.

The show in Kuala Lumpur was the next day. It was fucking crazy; we played with some killer bands, especially Fast Game, who ripped it up. Unfortunately, Mass Separation were not able to play because Yeap, their guitarist, actually lives in Australia. We did get to meet and hang with him in Melbourne.

The show was one of the craziest we'd ever played. Weng, who organized it, gave a rousing speech about the international DIY community and how our show was proof that it worked. He was also almost 40, wearing a crash helmet and holding an extremely oversized Styrofoam machine gun. Props were in effect for the show, all made by the kids. There was a mortar that shot cardboard balls, prison bars that were symbolically broken, Molotov cocktails, lots of big guns, and a robot. People threw bags of flour everywhere. The stage was full of kids; one kid laid onstage the entire set. Paul twisted his ankle and Mike chipped his tooth.

Faisal came up for the show in Kuala Lumpur, and he and Ahmad, Ejump, and Eddie all came with us to Indonesia.



Tony wih Kookaburra Bird

INDONESIA

Ari and some friends picked us up from the airport in Jakarta and took us back to an anarchist collective house in the city to spend the night. This is where we met up with the Malay punks. They held classes there for kids and adults in language and reading, among other things.

Our first show was in Yogyakarta; we had to take a ten-hour train ride starting at four a.m. to get there. Due to the lack of airflow, the uncomfortable seats, and the people constantly peddling their wares, the trip was, at times, torturous. But, we got to see much of the beautiful countryside of Java, whose landscape is made up mostly of rice paddies and villages. It is about half the size of California and it holds about 60 percent of the 200 million people who live in Indonesia's. It's the fourth most densely populated country in the world, just after the United States.

The show was crazy. Primitive Chimpanzee and Mortal Combat were among the bands, and there were 700 kids and about 300 motorcycles and scooters parked outside the club.

Near Yogya, we went to see Borobudur and Prambanan, which are 8th Century Buddhist and Hindu temples, respectively. While at Prambanan, about ten of us got chased by a long-tailed *macaque*—a type of monkey about the size of a medium dog. We pissed it off by getting too close to take a picture of it drinking a box of iced tea.

On the way there, we passed rallies for some of the twenty-four political parties running for president. The elections were to be held in four days. It was a very important election because it was the first time Indonesians could vote for a specific candidate; in the past they'd had to vote for a party which would then nominate its own choice for office. The rallies were wild. There were several thousand people all wearing the colors of the party on shirts, bandanas, spray painted hair, et cetera. They were piled on flatbed

Mystery Fruit, Hong Kong

Gauze

trucks and motorbikes. The motorbikes has sheet metal cones on the exhaust pipes to amplify the noise when rhythmically throttling the engine while the person on the back performed strange arm movements. We were told that the crowds were so big because people just saw it as a party and would get free shirts, hats, and shit, just for going.

Our next show was in Bandung, Ari's hometown and the third largest city in Java. Yet again, the show was awesome. Domestik Doctrine gave us just what we needed. Food Not Bombs and a local anarchist collective tabled the show; their flag was tied to a ten-foot bamboo pole and was used to lead the circle pit.

Ari is, maybe, the greatest person on earth. He showed us such a wonderful time and took care of us to the max. We were taken to Super Rambo jeans which had a 30-foot statue of John J. himself kneeling with an R.P.G. on his shoulder. We also went to an active volcano where Bull and Mike bathed naked in a hot spring.

At the foot of the volcano is an unassuming looking village that we drove through. Suddenly we stopped and Ari said, "We're here!" Where were we? We were at the crocodile farm! The farm was in the middle of this village, not out in the country or on the outskirts of town. This wasn't a farm to make handbags, but a program to breed this threatened species. We were told that there was a particularly big crocodile in the one tank. The one-handed man who ran the place was splashing a bamboo pole to try and raise it to the surface, but to no avail. It was mentioned that to see it we had to feed it. Feeding it meant tying a live chicken to a pole and splashing it into the water. At first, us vegans didn't want to do this. Well...we did want to see it eat a chicken, but we just felt weird about facilitating it. But Bull, being the super vegan, spoke up and said, "They're gonna feed it, anyway." With that justification, we paid the one-handed man our $2.35 and soon the chicken was splashing in the water. Suddenly this 20-foot *Cthulu* dinosaur leviathan burst forth from the black water and swallowed the chicken like it was a Tofutti Cutie. It was, without a doubt, the greatest $2.35 split three ways ever spent. After that, Tony's vegan ass was asking if they had a goat or some feral cats he could toss in the tank. To celebrate this amazing day, Ari took us to a place that had *surabi*—Indonesia pancakes—and fresh squeezed juice.

We were back in Jakarta to play our last show then fly out. This was Election Day. There was no trouble, but huge armored water cannon trucks were on the street and ready to go. Because it was election day, the kids were denied a permit to have the show. Instead of canceling it, a guerilla show was organized. It wound up being on a badminton court next to one kid's house. The show was to start at two and was only announced that morning. Still, over two hundred punks showed up. We played first, in case the show got shut down. It didn't, and by the time the last band fin-

ished, twice as many kids had shown up. Thus, we were asked to play again. It was hard. The heat in this part of the world is insane and relentless. The whole neighborhood was out to watch the show. Between the kids and the neighborhood there must have been a thousand people, several hundred of them children.

The kids—and I mean actual *kids*—were so much fun. They followed us around and asked for autographs and phone numbers. But so far, none of us have received any phone calls from eight-year-old Indonesians. We drew pictures for them in their schoolbooks of walruses or llamas or something. Some of the adults asked for autographs, too. One woman handed Tony her baby and asked him to sign it. He didn't know what to do, but she was insistent so he gingerly signed her baby on the leg. Hopefully the ink wasn't toxic or something.

We were sad to say goodbye to Ari, Ahmad, Fasial, Ejump, Eddie and all the kids we met there. But we were off to Japan.

JAPAN

After the absurdity of Southeast Asia, Japan felt normal to us. The temperature was wonderful; it was not the constant sweaty nut-fungus humidity and searing heat we'd experienced in the last three weeks. Kenjiro, who organized our show in Osaka, and a friend picked us up at the airport wielding a Rambo LP like a chauffeur would hold a sign with your name, immediately after we'd gone through customs doing our best to pretend we weren't a band.

They took us to an amazing supermarket covered in neon vegetables, and mirrors. Tony was starting to feel sick and by the time we got to Kenjiro's house, he had a fever and chills. Then the faucet butt started. Every one got sick to one degree or another. Some worse than others, but all of us were not completely well for most of Japan. Kenjiro was a great host and so much fun. His English was pretty good, but when we had trouble communicating he would act out what he was trying to say and it was often hilarious. Once, we were talking about Heresy, he started jumping off everything in his apartment mimicking the singer. If he was that funny in his second language, I can't imagine how funny he must be in his native tongue.

We played in a very small club (it seems most of the clubs are very small). Before the show an American and a New Zealand expatriate brought us food to make not-so-vegan friendly Japan easier on us. The show was fun and Kenjiro's band Hari Kari Generation was great and hilarious. After the show we did the *uchiage*, which is a special dinner for all the bands and promoter. Everyone pays a set fee and eats and drinks all they want. It is a Japanese hardcore custom done after almost every show. A special treat was that our old second guitarist, John, plus our friends, Derrick, Kristi, Josh, Jess, and Shannon, from home met us at the show.

We had a day off and went to see Gauze, D.S.B., Framtid, and Krew play. Framtid were unbelievable. Tony felt like he was in the trenches of Stalingrad and the stukas were dive-bombing him. While D.S.B. played, Bull ducked out to get some fresh air. In wandering around downtown, he came across a hip-hop dance class for teenagers. They only played Jay-Z's "99 Problems" over and over again for at least a half-hour. He couldn't bring himself to leave, it was just so amusing watching all these kids try to dance to that. Then Gauze delivered. Holy shit! It's all true what you hear about Gauze. They get on stage, barely make a noise and then batter you for half an hour without stopping. Then they're gone!

D.S.B. were taking us to the show the next day in Nagoya. So we split up and rode with them to the hotel and then down the street to the uchiage. We hung out some with D.S.B., Framtid, Gauze and Toshi, Gauze's right hand man. Toshi was very helpful with communication and ordering vegan food. Gauze's drummer spoke some English and we talked a bit. As the night went on, he got very drunk and used his extreme rippedness to manhandle his way into making out with Tony and Mike.

We went back to the hotel and tried to go to the sauna because there was one; we were denied because of our tattoos. Tattoos are still very taboo in Japan; usually they're associated with undesirables like the yakuza and punks.

The next day we played in Nagoya with Gauze, D.S.B, Tomorrow, and Muga. Every band was great. The entire time we spent with Gauze we never saw the bass player's (Mr. Shin) eyes. We saw him wear two different pairs of glasses, but never saw him change them. When we were with D.S.B, the guy who was driving the van always had his sunglasses on, even at night.

People have said that it's very difficult to eat vegan in Japan and that people are not helpful to vegans and vegetarians. We found this to be untrue. The options were limited, but people were extremely accommodating to our diets. If you have access to a kitchen, you're set. Otherwise, you'd better like seaweed.

Shows in Japan seem to be almost always in bar clubs and door prices are about 20 US dollars plus a charge for a drink ticket. Punk feels very different in Japan, more so than anywhere else we've been.

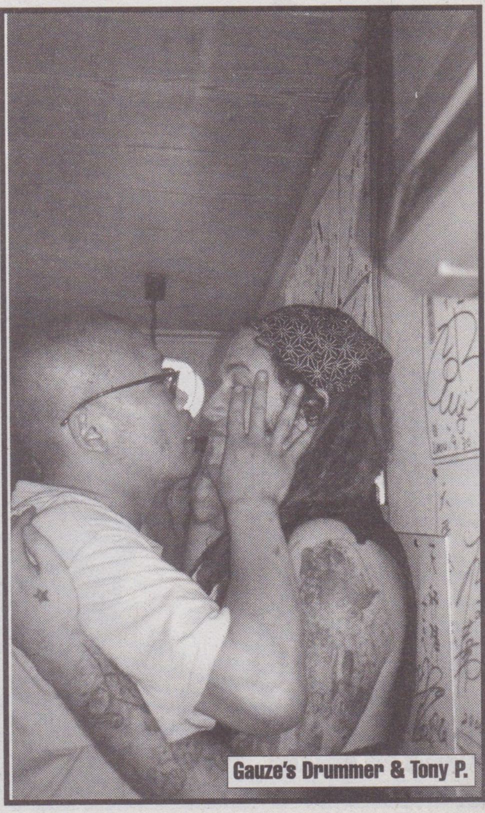
After our stint in Japan, w returned to Hong Kong, ate some more of Ms. Tiwari's food, and were off to play our last show. We played at youth center on top of a hill in the city. The show was packed and the kids were really enthusiastic. We played with a death metal band called Departing Cross, a pop punk band, Rizz, who booked the show's bands, and King Lychee. They are Hong Kong's most well known hardcore band; they play Converge-style metal core.

King Lychee had just gotten back from a show in Taiwan. They told us that the show had turned out to be part of a rally for independence. Taiwan has been independent since the 1950s, but isn't recognized as such by most of the world, because of the pressure from and fear of China, its former colonial power. When King Lychee arrived back home in Hong Kong, they were told that they could never play mainland China again. The kids in Taiwan were mad at them as well for not making any statements on stage in support of Taiwan's independence. A guy in Taiwan was now refusing to release their record. It sounded like they got a raw deal on both ends.

Rizz had done so much for the scene in Hong Kong. It was great to meet him and play with his band. The scene in Hong Kong is very new and the excitement is easy to see. The kids went apeshit when we played, but didn't know "Young 'Til I Die" when we played it, which we chose because we thought everyone would know it. The circle pits were huge, and since, for some reason, the youth center's back line had wireless rigs, Andy was able to circle pit while playing guitar and even led the circle pit outside and around the building.

The next day, Tony went birding at the Mai Po marshes. He had to get special permission and prove he was an "experienced birdwatcher" to go there. The rest of us went sightseeing and to Llama Island to swim. The sea was slimy and there was a power plant in the background. Bull's poor judgment in choosing to swim there would later come back to haunt him. We said a sad goodbye to Pranjal and the Tiwari family and left for home.

We agreed that this tour was one of, if not *the* greatest experience, of our lives. As a band, we spent over $10,000 to do this trip and we maybe made back $3,000. It's hard to gauge exactly because we did so many other things that cost



Gauze's Drummer & Tony P.

money besides playing shows. We worked our asses off for many months before this tour to be able to afford it. We did it all ourselves without financial backing from a label or sponsorship of any sort. The point is we did this solely because we wanted to see these places and meet these people. For all of us, this reaffirmed why we are dedicated to DIY hardcore punk. It is extremely expensive to go to Southeast Asia and Australia, but it is so worth it. I hope more bands go to these places. It looks like Tragedy is planning to do a tour similar to ours next winter, I hope that works out.

Tony would also like to reverse the flow. Somehow, some way, I'd like to bring over Mass Separation and Domestik Doctrine. I know this will be difficult. The USA does not like to grant visas to developing Muslim Nations. While it might not be possible, he'd like to try. Money would have to be raised for plane tickets, since it is beyond the reach of those kids to afford. Plus, there would be other expenses, like visas, food, et cetera. If anyone is interested in helping make this happen by organizing benefit shows and helping with research into acquiring visas, please get in touch.

Rambo would like to go back to all of these countries someday. We'd also like to go the Philippines, mainland China, Taiwan, and Korea as well. We are recording a new full-length for Havoc at the end of the year and we plan to tour the States and Europe early 2005. Our US tour will be in a van that runs on vegetable oil, so start dumpstering fast food restaurants for fryer oil now to help us out! After that, we'll hopefully hit South America and then we'll go back to Asia and Australia. Hey, does anyone know if there is a punk scene in India?

TOUR FOLLOW-UP STORY BY BULL

Four days after we got home, on my thirtieth birthday, I started to feel sick. At first I didn't think too much of it. I don't get sick very often, and when I do it usually doesn't last much more than a few days. This time it came on very quickly and intensely. I had almost unbearable sharp pains in my head, a high fever, sweats and chills. After three days of not sleeping, I went to a doctor for fear of having contracted Malaria. They told me to just take some Motrin. The next day I went to the emergency room because it had become completely unbearable. I waited about four hours to be seen. Then they took one blood test—apparently you need three for accurate Malaria results—and they told me to go home, drink a lot and take some Tylenol. Probably the only useful thing they suggested was to contact the infectious diseases department at the hospital. I called there the next day, and after much confusion—they thought I was HIV-positive—they told me the emergency room should not have let me out, and that I needed to come into their office immediately for testing. They also said I might need to have a spinal tap. I went in, they took a lot of my blood, and told me it would take a few days for results. The next night, a Saturday, at 10:30 p.m., they called me into the hospital. They had found an unidentified bacteria in my blood and wanted to start treatment right away. I wound up being there for three days before they figured out it was Typhus; I had Typhoid Fever just like on the Oregon Trail. Luckily, I forced myself to get health insurance after our last tour where I broke my leg. Thus, the only thing I had to pay for was my antibiotics, which clocked in at $167 for 12 pills! Because I work at a food co-op, the Center for Disease Control wouldn't allow me to return to work until they performed their own test on me, five weeks after I came down with my illness. I wound up being out of work for about three-and-a-half months total. I'm convinced it was that nasty-ass body of water in Hong Kong that did me in. Be forewarned: don't swim in oil-slicked water next to power plants.

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Thyphloid Bay, Hong Kong

MASSGRAV

MASSGRAV IS AN AMAZINGLY CRUSHING POWER TRIO HAILING FROM STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN. THEY TOTALLY BLEW ME AWAY WITH *HATFYLLD OCH NERPISSAD*, THEIR RAGING DEBUT EP. RELEASED ON ESCORBUTO RECORDINGS ON NEW YEAR'S EVE 2003, THIS PIECE OF BLACKEST HATE IS A SOON TO BE MODERN CLASSIC. SHORT, FAST, LOUD AND ALWAYS ON THE VERGE OF DESTRUCTION, THIS IS MASSGRAV IN THE FLESH.

INTERVIEW BY ALBERT FICHTER

MRR: Since you're a new band, could you please tell us the usual band history crap?

Ola: Johan and I were unfortunate enough to get mixed up with Distortion Records sometime in the mid-90s. Somewhere around that time, we found ourselves constantly getting shit-faced on Kir, passing out to the A-side of *Why?* (I still have it glued to my record player) and somehow, we decided we'd start a band. We forced a guy named Erlando to play drums and wrote a bunch of songs. We recorded our first demo, *Total Jävla Masslakt* (some call this *Spräckt Skita I Piketen*, but that wasn't the official name), which was very popular. This was before the Internet made it easy to become known everywhere. You had to tape-trade and other shit we're too lazy to get into. This was in 95 – 96. Now, Erlando was never any good and had a lot of problems with drugs, so we had to get rid of him. That was just the start of all kinds of messed up shit. I had to move to Stockholm to stay sane. Johan had to stay behind to stay alive. For the longest time, we could only rehearse in my one room apartment when Johan came to Stockholm, which wasn't very popular with the neighbours. Not much happened until we found Conny Slägga, a smelly, constantly pissed off crusty (the only real close encounter with crusties we've had so far, thank God!) that we met during the riots in Gothenburg in 2001. Conny was fast as hell and we recorded the *Fast I Skiten* release with him. It turned out OK, but he just got way out of hand. I think it's safe to say that drugs made us lose our drummer. Drugs and a totally unpredictable psyche! Conny could go from calm to frothing insane in seconds. He smelled bad too. In April of last year, we went to see GENOCIDE SS and Johan cornered Indy, since he knew he plays drums and likes fast music (and fast living). When he heard the *Fast I Skiten* record, he was blown away and asked to join up. We let him. We recorded *Hatfylld Och Nerpissad* and Escorbuto released it. It quickly sold out. We played some Gorefest up north and were invited by GENERAL SURGERY to destroy a club in Stockholm. Indy's arms got completely fucked, so now we have another drugged-up drummer to deal with. He's OK as long as he doesn't mix the painkillers with too much cheap wine. As you can see, we're not a new band. You just haven't noticed us before.

Johan: Just for the record: The Genocide SS gig where I ambushed Indy was held in November 2002. It's a funny story, because Ola and me didn't know him at all, but I'd read somewhere that he used to play drums and thought that this might be our chance to go down in history. I was drunk as hell and saw him standing all alone and fucked up (as always), and Ola was drunk because he left the gig before the headlining band got on stage. I think it was DISMEMBER. I jumped Indy and started to sweet-talk him and somehow I managed to convince the guy that he should play with Massgrav. Here we are now—the ultimate Massgrav-line-up. True 'til death!

MRR: How come we didn't hear anything from you earlier on? Why so few releases?

Indy: As for the few releases thing, we are not Human Waste.

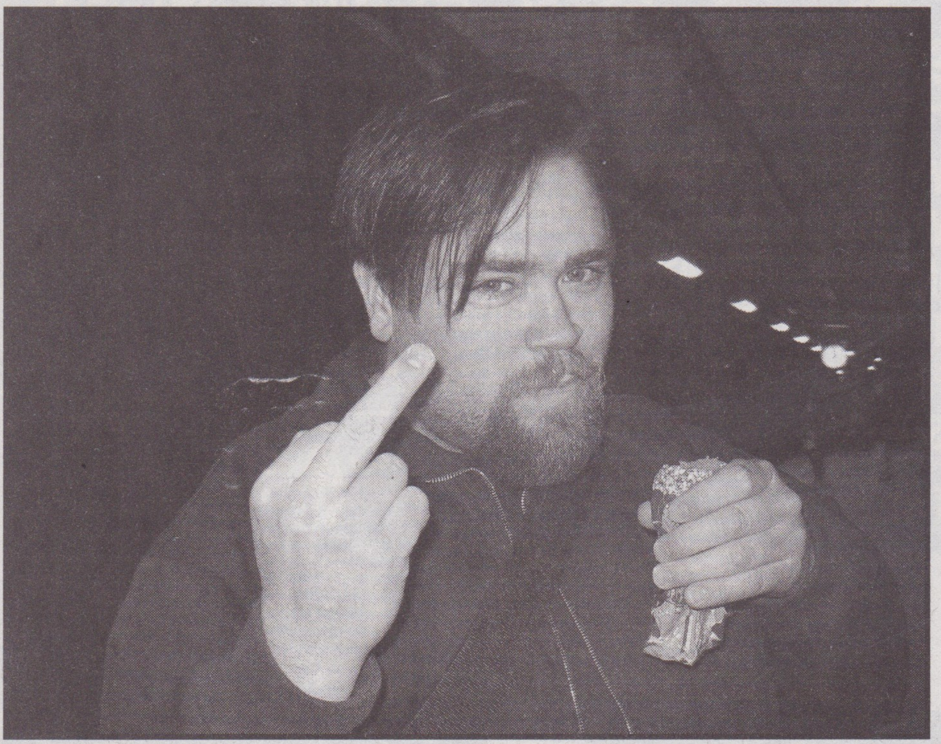
Ola: Thank God, hahaha!

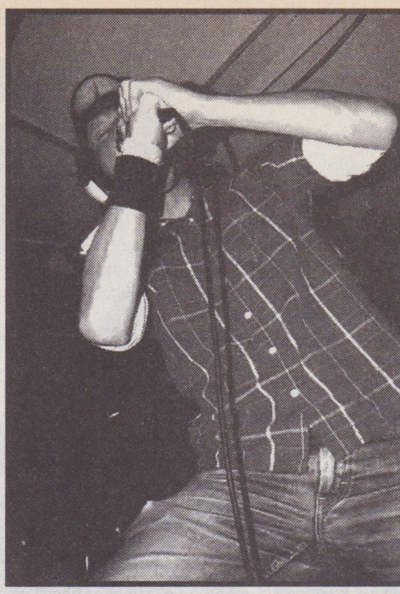
Johan: Yeah, I hate those bands that just keep pumpin' out records. It's about quality, not quantity, if you ask me. When it comes to Massgrav, there are actually some old demos out there. If you haven't heard of them, you're obviously not down with the scene, loser!

MRR: You seem very inclined to scorn and ridicule other bands, people and parts of the scene. How come? Isn't that a bit against what punk is all about?

Ola: For me, punk is not about unity. United with whom? How can you be united with crusty kids with studded jackets worth a fucking fortune that still try to scrounge a buck off you? How can you be united with no-brain "alternative" propaganda and pre-fabricated views of life? If we like people, it's because of the kind of person they are, not what lifestyle they claim to be part of. As for other bands, I feel no need to be "loyal" to anyone just because we play music that others may perceive as similar. If I think a band sucks and someone asks me about it, I'll let them know what I think. Sometimes (quite often, actually), you don't even have to ask me, I'll just start random rants unprovoked. To loop back to what punk is about, to me it's basically being sceptical against pretty much everything people are trying to tell you, whether it's what to buy or what to think. It's also a collective name for various types of music I like. To me, the music is what makes a song punk. You can have the world's most radical lyrics, but if you sing them Woody Guthrie style it won't be punk, it will just be more of that lame-ass singer/songwriter crap that the world has had more than it's filling of. Give it up already, OK?

MRR: In reviews you're often compared to MOB 47, KRIGSHOT and PROTES-BENGT. What do you think about that?





Ola: Mob FortyFuckingSeven…one of my favourite bands! In a way, it's the biggest compliment you can get. At the same time, we don't sound THAT much like Mob 47. Someone said we sound how they would have sounded if they had been around now, which is probably closer to the truth. I can understand the Krigshot reference, but I think we're more focused and have more of an edge. We write shorter (read: better) songs and our vocals are better. Our biggest similarity to Krigshot is probably that we're old and uncool looking, just like them.

Indy: There are a few lyrics on the EP that are truly inspired by Krigshot, but that's more of a tribute than a rip off, I think. By the way, Rolf Revålt founded the real Massgrav in 1977. Or so they say…

Johan: Actually, it's no problem for me. Mob 47 and Krigshot are some of the best bands that ever existed and we sure have stolen a lot from them. I can't really say that Protes-Bengt is a big influence or a favourite band of mine, but they are OK. As long as you don't compare us to TOTALT JAVLA MORKER, I'm fine.

MRR: What got you into punk and playing in bands in the first place? Why aren't you elite gymnasts instead of punk rockers?

Johan: I was a total thrash/death metal fan until I was 15 and then a friend of mine asked me if I wanted to form a punk band. I said yes, but I was hoping that we were going to start to play death metal, but it didn't happen. Instead my friend gave me some punk tapes and the rest is history. I'm still into death metal, though. The politics don't interest me. I'm only in it for the money.

Ola: I thought it would make me cool. I was wrong. I'm too fat to be an elite anything.

Indy: I'm too weak. At first, I only like punk album covers, since I've always been into war photos. Gradually, I got into the music and politics as well, mostly thanks to the guys in COUNTERBLAST and WARCOLLAPSE, who arranged so many great gigs at a place called Eldslandet in Jonkoping.

Johan: It's funny that you mention gymnastics. I used to be one of Sweden's leading athletes in the flying rings. Then I sold my soul to Rock'N'Roll.

Indy: You actually did fly through the rings? Hoho…I'd love to see that now with your six foot mohawk.

MRR: Do you rehearse a lot? A lot of bands claim they write all songs in the studio – how does that work in Massgrav?

Ola: Rehearsals depend on what condition we're in. It's generally better when we don't drink too much, otherwise we end up not learning anything. We just moved from a place we rented from a shady German guy. The ceiling was so low that you had to stand still or you would knock things over. We have a better place now and better equipment too. We never,

ever write things at rehearsal. Jamming is something I don't understand. It's for hippies! Johan and I write the songs at home. He writes most of them, although I've started to do more lately. Indy comes up with some lyrics and gives them to us. I tried writing music to a song in the studio once, "Tunnelbanan", and it turned out crappy. One of the worst songs we've recorded actually…way too pop oriented. We generally only rehearse if we have a gig or recording coming up.

Johan: Or if we're bored.

Ola: Or if we have nowhere else to drink.

MRR: Tell me about Escorbuto Recordings and how you got the deal.

Indy: It's a friend of ours named Johan Wallin (guitar player in SCURVY, REPUGNANT, GENERAL SURGERY and BOMBSTRIKE). His label and distro focuses on underground grindcore and death metal. He heard some old demo and got totally psyched. We got a really good deal and he did a great job, so he's the king. The *Hatfylld Och Nerpissad* EP was released on New Year's Eve 2003 and was limited to 525 copies. It seems like they're all sold out now.

Johan: Wait a minute now! Wallin is a greedy and stingy motherfucker. I mean, have you ever heard of a record deal where the band has to buy drinks for the company? In the case Massgrav and Escorbuto, it happens all the time.

Ola: Now he claims he's pissed about us abandoning him. If he just hangs on to a couple of those EPs, he'll make a fortune on eBay in a few years, just wait and see.

Indy: Nowadays, he's totally into TIAMAT (the new gay shit) and hip-hop and pretty much hates the underground scene. We can't support folks like him. Dropouts suck.

MRR: Future plans? I heard something about an album on Sound Pollution. Is that correct?

Johan: Yeah, sweet, isn't it? Ken Pollution got hold of a copy of the EP and was totally blown away. He emailed us and offered to release something down the road. Since we already had booked the studio to record a bunch of new songs, we gave two thumbs up to Ken. The full length will be out in late 2004.

Ola: The album will be called *Napalm Over Stureplan*. That means pretty much what you'd expect it to mean, napalm over a place called Stureplan, a part of Stockholm where all the rich and beautiful meet to go to trendy bars to kiss ass, take drugs and listen to crap music. The title track is an old song that we didn't have time to record for the EP. It's one of our classics. The entire EP will also be included on the CD, but remixed and slightly altered to make it more raw, brutal and desperate. The rest of the tracks are brand new and they kick ass! Total fucking hate and extreme desperation! I honestly don't think anyone will be disappointed. We've got some fat fucking songs waiting for you. I can't wait to see what people think of them. We've played a few of them live and that went really well.

We still haven't decided the order of the songs but there's a track called "Va ere för fel på socialen?" that I think will be the first track on the CD. Massgrav at its very best!

Johan: Yeah, the new tracks are all fast and raging but still catchy as hell. It's HC-thrash in the classic Swedish style. No endless riffing here, thank you very much. We'll try to squeeze in 25 tracks, all recorded and mixed in the same old garage-studio that we always use.

Ola: We were really happy with the way we sounded on the EP and have tried to keep everything pretty much the same. We're still working with Micke Nordström, he's really good and is great to work with. Apparently, other bands have contacted him about recording stuff just to get "the Massgrav sound"!

MRR: Have you played many gigs so far? Tell me about them. What is a Massgrav gig like?

Ola: No we haven't, for two reasons. First of all, we're too lazy. We only play when people ask us to and they don't do that very often. Second, Indy is so fucking weak that he keeps asking for breaks in the set. It gets embarrassing. I don't know if us releasing a CD on Sound Pollution will change things but Escorbuto has been really great about paying for hotels and taxis and shit when we play out of town. But if anyone wants to arrange anything, we can rough it a bit, as long as we don't have to stay with crusties and eat vegetarian food.

Johan: When we played in Orsa, (a redneck hood in the north of Sweden) the hippies who arranged the gig offered us some kind of veggie-stew. We told 'em to fuck off and went down to the local smokehouse for a nice piece of meat. That's Massgrav in a nutshell…

Ola: Massgrav gigs are short and loud and we talk a lot of shit in between songs. Johan insults the audience and calls them a bunch of politically incorrect stuff. Indy asks us to wait a bit before starting the next song and I just huff and puff into the mike. As the songs are hard (for us) to play, we can't move about all that much. No matter how big we get, we will never be one of those bands who have platforms and walkways to run around on.

Indy: I'd love to see you two guys running around like some fucking geeks on stage, posing for the masses. I would enjoy one of those 360 degrees spinning drum kits from hell, with hundreds of tom toms and thousands of cymbals. Of course, I would only use the snare and the ride. Monsters Of Rock – here we come!

Johan: To me, it's all about the show. Since we can't afford fireworks, I have to go for the insults to get the audience in a good mood.

MRR: Since your lyrics are in Swedish, can you explain what Massgrav is all about lyrically? What does the title of your EP mean?

Johan: Massgrav's lyrics deal with everything that makes us feel hateful. We try to approach the different subjects with humour. The title *Hatfylld och nerpissad* could be translated into something like "Filled with hate and pissed on". It's about the state beyond hate. You know, when you're so filled with hate that you just have to piss in your pants.

Indy: We do that all the time. Bed-wetting is an art form seldom practised by the multitude.

MRR: Who's responsible for the album layout and stuff like that?

Ola: So far, we've made everything ourselves except for our logo. Ubbe in REGURGITATE/NASUM made that. There was a guy from CUNTSUCKING CANNIBALS who was going to make one, but we never heard from him. Ubbe's logo is perfect, so we're not sorry. We made the EP cover ourselves. We'll make the upcoming CD-cover, even though it seems to take forever. Mattias designed our web page himself. No, he's not blind. We try to make everything ourselves so that no one can fuck things up for us. Plus we don't have anyone that has offered to do things for us. Minions – get in touch!

Johan: We're so damn DIY that we even write our own songs!

Indy: As for the web page, I promised myself to finish it within twenty minutes. I was held up by a phone call from one of my ladies, so I guess I did it all in five. It's pretty smashing, I think. I'm proud of it. It's been awarded with some mighty fine design prizes in almost every European state I can think of.

MRR: Name the best punk album ever made!

Indy: I'd say G-ANX's *Flashbacks*, but since that's a discography album I might have to say LIBREESE and their amazing *Krystvärkar* album. The worst has to got to be every damned "trallpunk" album that's ever been recorded with bands like DIA PSALMA, DE LYCKLIGA KOMPISARNA. I hate that shit from the bottom of my heart.

Johan: Krigshot's *Örebromangel*!

Ola: My pick changes all the time. Right now, I like MOB 47's *Garanterat Mangel* and the LIMP WRIST album.

MRR: What else do you listen to besides punk?

Johan: Well, the three of us differ a lot when it comes to musical taste outside of the obvious punk/HC-thrash shit. As I said before, I'm into the good ol' thrash/death-metal scene. But I'm also really keen on fast Rock'N'Roll like the New Bomb Turks and SUPERSUCKERS. Oh, I almost forgot Elvis.

Indy: I listen to everything that's good, and if it sucks I might even listen to that as well. A man or woman can never own too many records.

MRR: So what's next for the almighty Massgrav?

Johan: As I mentioned before, Sound Pollution Records will release our debut-CD *Napalm over Stureplan* in the autumn. It's a must-have! Then we will have some old tracks featured on a French comp-CD and some Swedish compilations as well. Other than that, we're really keen to tour the U.S. and Japan, so please feel free to book us.

MRR: Shout outs?

Indy: Shout outs to Johan Wallin/Escorbuto Recordings and Micke Nordström (the producer) for doing such a great job with our first EP. Thanks to Ken Pollution for releasing the upcoming album. It's amazing to have stuff out on the label that has released G-Anx. ASSUCK, HELLNATION and Krigshot! Also thanks to friends and enemies who support us in either way, both through love and hate. Hails to our friends in General Surgery, ARSEDESTROYER, Regurgitate, Gurra from SUB VISION, PP7 GAFTZEB, Repugnant, Erik from WATAIN, SAYYADINA, Krigshot, KONTROVERS, Pollution-Jonas, UNCURBED, JAVELINS… Thanks to the zines for reviewing our music.

Ola: I don't think he reads *MRR*, but Tomas Birnik has helped us a lot by recording stuff, trying out as a singer, lending us equipment, money, drugs and letting us sleep on his floor when we didn't have a place to live.

Johan: My turn? I just want to hail these bands because they are some of the few Swedish bands today that really deserves to be kissed in the ass: DISKONTO, Sayyadina, Kontrovers, THE VECTORS, VICTIMS and Krigshot. And thank you, *MRR*. We love you.

Ola: I thought you said it was fucked up with bands that just keep sending hails to each other?

Johan: I did?! OK, fuck 'em all…

http://www.massgrav.com

THE CRITICS

MRR: OK, before we start, just tell us what kind of mood you are in as you sit down to answer this interview—happy, sad; angry, jubilant; bored, excited; frustrated, chilled; any of these, all of these, something else?

Andy: Bored I suppose, I work from home so things tend to get a bit monotonous most days. Other than that probably excited as we're recording our first single in a few weeks so that's always something to look forward to.

MRR: As THE CRITICS is no doubt a moderately new name to *MRR* readers—can you just tell us a bit about how, why, where and when the band got together. The basic early history kind of stuff.

Andy: We first got together in 1999 to start jamming some ideas I'd had for years. Basically we didn't really now what we wanted or what we were doing. I myself had not played in a band before. We all new each other from school and lived in relatively the same area. From there we refined what songs we did have (as a three piece at this stage), wrote a few more together and after probably six months or so we played our first show. After a while we started to think we needed another guitarist, as I was and still am a 'bar chord bobby.' So having been rehearsing in the same place as GYROSCOPE and being friends with them, we pulled Zok on board as they we're having a six month break so their drummer could travel. But then after his return Zok went back to GYROSCOPE and we were left looking for a new guitarist. Macca, our drummer, had previously been in a band with Matt and we thought we'd ask him to have a go! Since then we've been writing and playing tirelessly in Perth before deciding to move to Melbourne for six months to get our name around a bit and play to some different crowds. It's been almost a year in Melbourne now. The response we've had and the friends we've made have just been too good to go home. At this stage we've moving back to Perth in February to record and hopefully get our old jobs back.

MRR: Of the current band members, two of them were formerly in a Folk band yeah? How did those two members find the transition from Folk to Punk? Were there any problems with the pace of the music, the volume or the Punk crowd in general? Do you think that their experience playing Folk—which is practically a completely opposing polemic to that of Punk—has had any positive effect on THE CRITICS? Is the current line-up settled now—do you feel it is the best the band has ever had?

Andy: Yeah Macca and Matt were in a Folk band together. Macca didn't have any problems when we started as he's always played rock—I think he played some Folk so he could lay back, get pissed and not have to play anything too complex!!! Matt I suppose did have a few early problems, not with the music but—just as you said—the pace and probably the simplicity of the majority of our music. And yes the volume change would have been a big shock to Matt at first I'd imagine! But yeah, I think their experience in a Folk band has had a positive influence on us as a band. I wouldn't say that it's influenced any song writing or anything like that, it just hasn't been a bad thing! Yeah, the current line-up is working well. We're all living together at the moment so it's a full-time band pretty much. Sometimes that's a good thing but not others, especially when you just want to unplug and take your mind off it. I'd have to say it's the best line-up so far, especially because when we had Zok it was always gonna be a temporary thing and being a three-piece sucked. The songs we've written for the next EP are by far the best to date so there is definitely something going right.

MRR: You released the mini-album, *The Incentive…* on Australian label Rabbit Records. How did you get hooked up with Matt and the guys there? Have you tried any other labels? Any other labels offered to release *The Incentive…* abroad?

Andy: We knew Matt Rabbit cause he was the drunken fool that used to come to our shows and heckle us. I think he offered to put it out and having not released anything properly before we thought it was a really good option. But, having done so, we've never been happier. Matt is an awesome guy

that really looks after us and basically is keen to do whatever we want to do and help wherever he can. We haven't really tried any other labels as we're pretty happy doing it on an independent label with no major strings attached!

MRR: Where do you stand on the major label issue? Let's say Fat Wreck wanted to sign the band—is that something you would go for? And if Sony came a knocking?

..Andy: Personally it would have to be a pretty good offer with shit loads of freedom for me to even consider a major. I'm not going to say anything bad about Fat Wreck, but I really doubt they'd be interested in us. We don't tell enough dick and fart jokes! As for Sony!! They should write a book titled *How To Ruin A Band In One Release*. I'd fucken hate that kind of pressure and manipulation on my song writing based on them wanting you to sell to a particular target audience! We got a target audience somewhere in the world—we just have to find it!

MRR: *The Incentive...* has an incredibly clear yet intense, powerful sound—the vocals especially—you must be happy with the way it came out. Did you have a set sound in mind as you went to record, or was it a sound that progressed naturally with the aid of a studio engineer? Does this release vary much when compared with your earlier demo?

Andy: Yeah, we are really happy with 'The Incentive...' We wanted a pretty live sounding release that captured what we were about live! It is exactly how we wanted it, which is a result of Dr Alien Smith from Bergerk Studios—our engineer—that helped us get that. That's why we're getting him to do our next recordings. It sounds ten times better than our demo which surprisingly sold and was received well. That was rushed and all the sounds were crap basically! *The Incentive...* has had an awesome response in reviews around the world and in Oz as well. Sales are doing great too.

MRR: If we can just talk about a few of the tracks on the record, starting with the opener 'One More Star'. The lyrics make it abundantly clear you are not happy with the direction Australia is heading in via its Americanisation. What are the faults that you see within Australia to declare "We're the 51st state of the USA." Do you not think the UK has more of a right to that title?

Andy: Anything I write is an expression from me and it's my point of view. I don't try and be one of those preachers that say if you don't agree with me then you're fucked. 'One More Star' is a result of growing up, watching kids around me getting sucked in more and more to American culture. I'm not trying to say some massive anti-American Imperialism statement, more so an observation of what I see around me. Yeah, fair enough, I'm not happy about it—why would you want to be part of a culture with such ignorance and disrespect for each other and anyone outside where you live? I think we have the best culture anywhere. As for the UK, it has problems of its own and maybe does have the right to be called the 51st State, but as I said, it's my opinion. I have never been there so it wouldn't be fair to judge.

MRR: Lyrics such as, "Fragments of the story told," "You don't give a fuck about the outside world," "Painting pictures in black and white," and "Just a story you made to suit," suggest "Hard Pressed" is an attack on the news media—is that correct? What are your views on the mainstream media there in Australia? What about your former fellow countryman—Rupert Murdoch? Do you feel that he has too much media power, considering some of his dubious opinions on just about all matters?

Andy: Yeah, I'm not a big newspaper reader. I can't actually remember the last time I read one. I'm better off going to a library and looking in the Science Fiction section for something with a bit more truth in it!! Unfortunately the media does have a lot of power because there is a lot of people that believe every word they read and hear on the telly. People like Mr Murdoch know this and use this angle to make money and manipulate peoples' views to suit themselves, or provide a particular opinion on a matter or person based on the presentation of the information.

MRR: Your lyrics in general tend to reflect a serious political/social conscience. Do you feel that as the very nature of Punk is confrontational, lyrics should set out to challenge, inform and question? What's your opinion on the 3-minute love song? You ever see yourselves going down that road?

Andy: Punk is the most overused, misunderstood genre that gets chucked around these days where bands are concerned. I agree with some of the punk ideals. It depends which era or whose version of what punk is about, you believe! There's a lot of new bands around at the moment that are classed as Punk bands that have just ripped off the exact sound they've heard on old records which really shits me, cause last year they were new metal or some crap. Now the low fi sound is popular they jump into that and try and tell everyone they've been doing it for years! How many? 26? That'd make them a lot older than 20. I don't think there's anything wrong in taking influences from past bands, but emulating them to the point of almost being that band again is insulting to the band and people listening.

I just write about things that affect me. It's unfortunate that the world is in this much trouble at the moment that the majority of inspiration comes from such serious topics. I do try to be socially and politically conscious as there are too many people that don't give a shit. At the end of the day, I'm a sucker for melody. I'd like to think that people read my lyrics and go, "*Yeah, I agree with that,*" and feel like they're not the only one thinking that way. If I felt that I wanted to write a 3-minute love song I'd do it. It'd have to be pretty rocking still though. I think you could safely say we won't be going down that road.

MRR: You've just released the 7" single, "Pull Your Head In'—another track that appears to have quite a volatile message. This was recorded at the same session as *The Incentive*... I assume? Why hold this track back for a single release?

Andy: That song was recorded at a later date specifically for a 7" release. Ray from OUT OF THE LOOP wanted us to do something so we did it. We jumped at the chance to release a 7". It still may appear on the next EP so more people get to hear it as the 7" was a pretty limited run and a lot of people don't buy records anymore. Why I have no idea! I think it is a really good song with good ideas that people definitely relate to.

MRR: I see there's a cover of the SUNNYBOYS track, 'Tunnel Of My Love'. Do you do any other covers in a live environment? I did read an interview with you in 'TMT' zine where you stated you never did any covers in the early days of the band—why was that? And why do you now feel it suitable to record and release a cover?

Andy: We used to play some covers a few years ago!! We used to do some JAWBREAKER and some RAMONES and BAD RELIGION. I've always loved that SUNNYBOYS song. I heard it on a surf video years ago and it stuck since then. I think the question in *TMT* referred to the fact that we didn't start off doing covers in rehearsals when we first got together in order to develop a sound and identity, otherwise I misread the question at the time and heaps of people will say I'm a liar otherwise.

MRR: I understand you have a track on an Asian Man Recs compilation too. How did you get involved with them?

Andy: I think Matt Rabbit had had some correspondence with Mike Park and I just sent a CD in when they had an unsigned band comp as I liked a few bands on Asian Man and the Asian Man ideals. Maybe through Mike having heard the CD before helped us get on that one. We're on *Punk O Clock 3* and a comp coming up called *Helltrack* which is out sometime soonish with a whole heap of Oz and overseas bands.

MRR: Over the last year or so you have played with some pretty big bands including LAGWAGON, MILLENCOLIN, HOT WATER MUSIC and more. Any stories to tell, any rampant egos among them? Any bands you had a particular affinity with? Have you played any large, outdoor shows? Do you prefer that kind of show, or the smaller intimate club shows?

Andy: We haven't played any massive outdoor shows yet. But I'd say I definitely prefer intimate shows where everyone that's there gets into the music.

MRR: Let us just focus on Australia itself a little. You mentioned you are currently residing in Melbourne instead of your native Perth. What differences are apparent between life and society on the west of Australia as represented by Perth, and that on the east as represented by Melbourne?

Andy: I don't really think there is any major differences to tell ya the truth! Melbourne is obviously bigger and probably just as culturally diverse as Perth so it wasn't really a big change. Of course Perth is a bit more relaxed and Melbourne has its arty thing, but on the whole Australian people are the same wherever you go. Otherwise this would have been an awesome question to answer.

MRR: Australia has a rich Punk heritage, from RADIO BIRDMAN and THE SAINTS, through SCIENTISTS, CELIBATE RIFLES, VICIOUS CIRCLE, SICK THINGS and HARD-ONS and onto H-BLOCK 101, BODYJAR and Sony-signers FRENZAL RHOMB. Do you feel this kind of quality Punk heritage has played an influence on you as a band? Is the influence of these bands still felt throughout Australia's Punk scene in general?

Andy: I think that a lot of this heritage has been lost or forgotten about. Especially the older bands. They paved a path for a lot of bands and made Australia known for good honest music around the world. Bands like H-BLOCK 101 or the HARD-ONS keep this alive though, which is why if you're not at a H-BLOCK 101 show any time they play, you'd want to be dumb or just stupid, cause the energy those guys create is unbelievable and gives me hope that there is still some substance left in what's becoming a very shallow and false industry!

MRR: Do you feel the fact that Australia, being the "island continent" it is, has hindered the progress of Aussie bands when compared with their European and American counterparts? Could this ostracism be seen as a positive—in the sense that Aussie bands are maybe that much less influenced by the outside world and form a tighter unit within Australia itself?

Andy: I definitely think that Australia has a level of music that is on par—if not better—than the rest of the world. Generally Aussie music comes across more honest with less bullshit and gimmicks. I think that the so-called isolation is a good thing. There's less com-

petition so you don't get a lot of similar bands doing the same old shit. It seems to provide a lot more freedom and diversity on each scene—and nationally as well.

MRR: What are your views on being a member of the Commonwealth? Are you happy with having the Queen as a Head of State, or would you prefer a totally independent Prime Minister/President?

Andy: Personally I'd go with the independent Prime Minister/President.

MRR: And what are your views on your PM, John Howard? He has had a lot of accusations of racism placed upon him—do you feel they are justified? What do you feel about his stance regarding the war in Iraq?

Andy: I'm not a big fan of Mr Howard. I've always been a Labour Voter due to being brought up in a Labour voting house and generally not being rich, which is who the Liberals generally govern for. As any leader we've had in the past, they are all just puppets any way. If anything, the whole Party is to blame for actions taken by the government. I wouldn't say he was Racist—just a bloody idiot. I think Mr Howard saw the war as a chance to make a name for himself by having a major association with George.W. and the US. Unfortunately it reflects on our country, having him support some irrational and ignorant actions that put our people and country under threats that really shouldn't be there..

MRR: How do you, as an Australian, view the rights of the Aborigines? Should they have more rights and power? Do they ever get involved with the Punk Scene?

Andy: I think Aboriginals have the same rights and power as everyone else. As usual the media will manipulate this to make them seem a lot worse off than they are. I have some good friends that are Aboriginal and just as involved in society as everyone else. I don't know why they aren't involved in the Punk scene though.

MRR: What are the best and worst aspects of being a citizen of Australia? If you could change one thing about Australian culture, what would it be?

Andy: I absolutely love being an Australian and love our culture. If I could change anything it would be as I said before—the effects of other cultures on ours. I'm not saying I hate being multicultural, I just think that we should try to hang on to the lifestyle that we are known for and not let, especially the younger generation, get caught up in the Americanisation caused on by the TV and video games that they rot their brains in front of everyday. When I was young it was fishing and cricket and footy. Not running around yelling in American accents, imitating the latest movie. But I have to stress, I don't hate America or American people, I just hate the effects they have on our culture.

MRR: One aspect of Australasian life—at least from the perspective we get here in Britain—is the desire to travel. Did any of you ever take a year out to travel? How important do you feel the act of travelling is when placed within the whole experience of life? Any favoured places you have visited, or wish to visit?

Andy: I haven't traveled outside of Australia. I haven't had the opportunity to do it. Also I pretty much finished school, went to Tafe, got a job and started a band, so I haven't had the time or money to travel as yet. I would like to travel as mates I know who have the travel bug say you have to do it. Hopefully I can get to travel with the band so I'll get the best of both worlds. I think that people who I know who have traveled come home a lot more knowledgeable on dealing with people and overcoming tight situations. I would love to get to the UK and Europe mainly. I think our music would be appreciated the most there. Also Japan cause bands I've talked that have been there say it's an awesome place and really great people.

MRR: So, what are the immediate plans for THE CRITICS? You playing overseas at all—New Zealand, Asia, USA, Europe even? Anymore releases lined up? What about new songs—are they following a similar direction as those on the CD and 7"? Any plans yet for the follow-up to *The Incentive*...?

Andy: We are just concentrating on touring Australia at the moment as we moving back to Perth soon, so we want to be able to tour the East Coast in the future and play to people who actually know who we are. We're recording our next single in a few weeks and the 2nd EP in February next year. The songs that we have written for the new EP are still unmistakably our sound, but probably a little more thought out and I think our best songs yet, lyrically and musically. I would love to get overseas but it's pretty expensive unless we're getting some sort of assistance. Hint hint.

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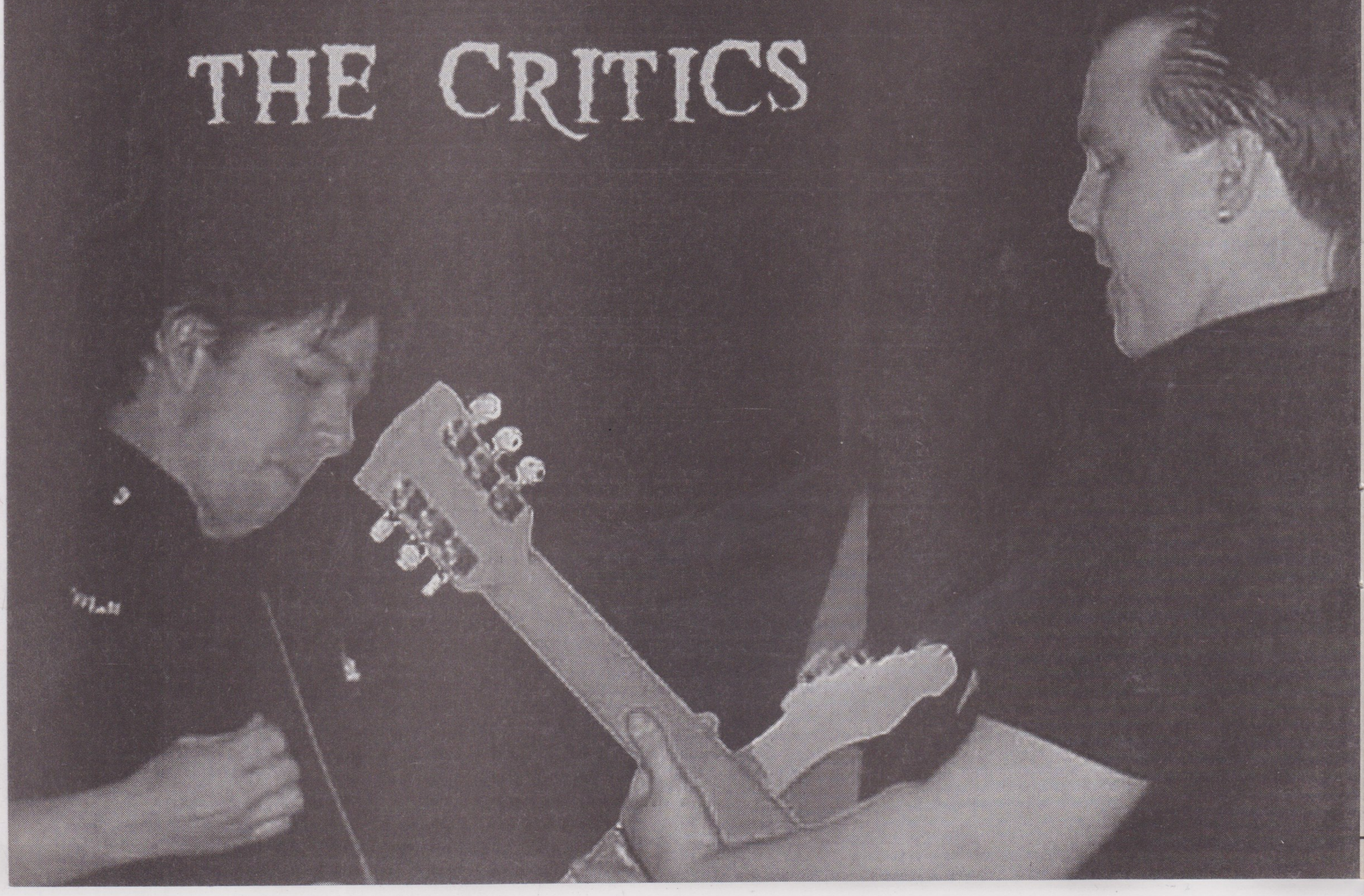

ASS

A few months ago I found myself back home in Minneapolis for a few weeks. While I was back home I attended a show at the Triple Rock Social Club. Disrespect was headlining the show, but I ended up a lot more interested in the band that played right before them, ASS. This local band blew me away. With one full-length record and one West coast tour under their belt, they are blowing up the scene in Minneapolis. After talking to them for only a short time I found them to me incredibly interesting, and great people to boot. I set up a time to interview these fools and this is what came out. Interview by Fred.

MRR: OK, let's start this off the regular way. Say your name and what you play.
Tiff O'-knee: Tiff-O'-knee, and I play guitar.
Cory: I'm Cory and I play bass.
Klaus: I'm Klaus and I play drums.
Jim: I'm Jim and I sing.
F: So what's the narrative of how you guys came together?
Tiff O'-knee: I think it started because Jim wanted to be in a punk band.
Jim: I was trying to put a band together for a long time and then I was like, fuck it. I'm just going to play drums and sing and Tiff-O'-knee, you'll play guitar. And that didn't work.
F: Yeah, drums and singing never work.
Jim: Yeah. So then we got more members.
Tiff O'-knee: We roped in Cory
Cory: Yeah, and then we roped in our original drummer Gab.
Jim: He was really good.
Cory: Then we released a demo. That gave us our drummer for about a year. Then he didn't show up for some shows and that was a problem, so we let him go.
Tiff O'-knee: (laughing) We had to downsize and he was the first to go. Then we were able to profit again.
Jim: At this time Klaus was drumming for DANGER BOY AND THE ROAD VULTURES, a local band we played with all the time. And so he started playing with us and now he been with us for a year.
Klaus: Yeah I've been with the band since January of 2003.
Tiff O'-knee: For the last eight years Klaus has been drumming for us.
Jim: And then we put out our record and here we are today.
MRR: Great. Now from what I understand you guys all listen to different types of music. What would you claim as your influences?
Jim: I listen to a lot of punk rock and that's why I wanted to be in a punk rock band.
Tiff O'-knee: Growing up I was really into metal. The biggest punk influences that I had were Naked Raygun and Minor Threat, and that was about the extent of it. But Jim made me be in his band so...(more laughter)
Jim: Man, this looks all weird.
MRR: So, you didn't originally want to be in a punk band.
Tiff O'-knee: I did. I just didn't necessary think I would be in one. But being into metal works.
Jim: Yeah Tiff O'-knee and I both grew up in the suburbs so we didn't know about good punk until we moved into the city. And that was like five years ago.
Cory: Most of us don't listen to exclusively punk. We listen to weird 80s pop music.
Tiff O'-knee: What's so weird about it?
Cory: And I listen to a lot of Warped Records stuff. I don't really listen to much punk in my free time. I didn't listen to that much punk at all until Jim recommended a CRASS record to me so I got it.
Jim: I made everyone join this band. (everyone laughs)
Cory: I just overheard you talking about it a lot, and I got a gift certificate to Hot Topic. (more laughter)
Jim: Yep you grew up in the suburbs as well.
Klaus: I started out listen to the generic stuff. You know NIRVANA and that sort of stuff and my taste has kind of evolved since then and now I listen almost exclusively to hip-hop within the last year.
Jim: And that one MURDER CITY DEVILS 10"
Klaus: Yeah, and the MURDER CITY DEVILS 10". I still listen to some rock stuff, but I've really moved away from rock. It's been really interesting for me because in this band we play with a lot of hardcore bands and that's really turned me off from hardcore. Like seriously, after awhile they all sound the same and that why I really like what were doing, because all of us have such different taste in music and very little of that is hardcore and it comes out as were not just another hardcore band.
Jim: I still listen to a lot of hardcore.
MRR: Do you guys have any difficulties writing music with such different interests?
Jim: No, it kind of works
Tiff O'-knee: Whenever Jim will come to us with some punk riff, we'll play with it and he'll hate it and

he'll have to leave the room. And then ali of a sudden he'll come running back into the room and say, "Yes, yes that's it."

MRR: You have the song "21" where you talk about playing all age shows. Please expand on that.

Jim: When ASS first started there was an awful time for the punk scene where everyone was playing at this shitty sports bar downtown and everyone was ID'd and it sucked. I've always thought ID shows where really dumb. So we set up all age shows in basements and stuff. There are good places now.

Tiff O'-knee: The lyrics to "21" explain it really well. It's just like, it's supposed to be for the kids but the kids can't go to the shows. That's bullshit.

Jim: When we go to shows the kids are the ones up front singing along and dancing and having a blast. That's fun for me.

MRR: When I was growing up I had to stay home from some of my favorite bands playing at First Ave because I was young I couldn't see them. It was such a burn.

Jim: Now there's this place called the Malla. It's a collectively-run venue, and there is a free school attached to it. It's amazing, they do all kinds of good stuff. They have food nights and movie nights. Totally pure DIY and punk in action, it's amazing.

MRR: They have a school attached?

Klaus: Yeah, they have free classes like bike fixing, and...

Jim: Spanish. It's super rad. I'm really excited about Minneapolis these days.

Tiff O'-knee: I really liked that when the Malla opened, it was like a totally new group of kids in addition to the kids already going to shows. It was a lot wider variety then what had been going on.

Klaus: For a while Minneapolis didn't really have an all ages venue. They had the Foxfire and that closed down.

Jim: Then there was the Babylon but there was a whole bunch of weird drama surrounding it and then it burned down.

Klaus: Even without a good venue bands still did stuff so they could exist. I think there were just a lot more basement shows going on then.

Jim: Yeah, it's just like when your band is first starting the only way to get shows for your band is setting them up yourself.

Klaus: They're definitely my favorite to play anyway.

Jim: Like this house, we did a ton of basement shows like two summers ago.

MRR: You motioned before the interview something about a potluck show, what was that all about?

Jim: Pretty much every ASS show that's not at a venue we have a pot luck. I think vegan pot lucks are a really great way to deal with veganism without telling people what to do. It's just like, " Hey, here's some vegan food for you. And it's good and it was easy to make."

Tiff O'-knee: It's not even just vegan. When you're a vegan or vegetarian, people are like, "What do you eat?" It's a nice way to show them that you eat actually great food.

MRR: Do a lot of people contribute to the potluck?

Jim: Well, no. (laughter) When we played in Rapid City, I do this food zine and we sent it up there and they made copies and when we got there like every kid in Rapid City made food for the show. It was amazing. Here it's usually like 5 or 6 people bring food.

Tiff O'-knee: When its house shows a lot of people bring food, but at venues no one really does.

MRR: Any food fights?

Klaus: No. Wow, I'm surprised.

Jim: Yeah, wow, that's surprising.

MRR: At a good show that's the first thing you think would happen.

Tiff O'-knee: All that bread.

Jim: The food's too good. (Laughter)

MRR: So tell me more about your zine you mentioned.

Jim: It's a very small zine with some vegan food recipes called *The Twin Cities Foodcore Combat Manual*. There's one issue out so far, and I'm working on the second. The second issue is nice because a lot of people contributed stuff and it should be out soon.

MRR: Right on. Do any of you guys write anything? (Referring to the rest of the band)

Cory: No.

Klaus: No.

Tiff O'-knee: I tried to contribute a recipe for Jim's zine but he totally dissed me and left it out. (laughter) No it's cool; I didn't want to write for it anyway.

MRR: At your show I noticed the crowd got really into one song in particular called "Sex-Ed." I also found the lyrics really interesting. Could you say something about what's behind this song?

Jim: It's about homophobia and transphobia and all that shit. It's totally indoctrinated into kid's heads through schools. And schools are pushing absence-only sex education, which is saying you can only have sex after your married and you can only marry with someone of the opposite gender. And we wouldn't even mention it's possible to be gay or bisexual or anything else. I think it's so fucked up that that constitutes sexual education. Just one side of the story and it's totally propaganda for the Christian Right wing. That's what it's about.

MRR: I understand there is a big bike scene in Minneapolis that one of you takes part in.

Klaus: Yeah. I've had two tall bikes. I have a lot of friends who are real into bikes and are in the Hard Times Bike Club. I volunteer every weekend at a bike shop called the Grease Pit. And I just won a courier race today.

Jim: You just won a courier race?

Tiff O'-knee: Wait ago Klaus, Nice work.

Klaus: There are lots of good bike co-ops here. Like the Hub just opened which is right in front of the Malla. There's lots of bike clubs around here. We have the Black Label bike club.

Tiff O'-knee: The Root Beer bike club.

Klaus: The Scallywags, which is a Christian bike club.

Jim: They're exactly like the Black Label bike club, except religious.

MRR: With all these clubs here is there any competition between the clubs during races and stuff?

Klaus: No, it's pretty much every one for them self.

Jim: None of us have a car so we just bike everywhere all year.

MRR: In Minnesota that can get real ruff I imagine.

Jim: It's cold but it's flat. When you go and it's a blizzard outside and ice everywhere and 30 below and then you get there, you feel like such a warrior. And people are like, *you rode your bike!?*

MRR: Great. Well is there anything I left out?

All: nope, not really.

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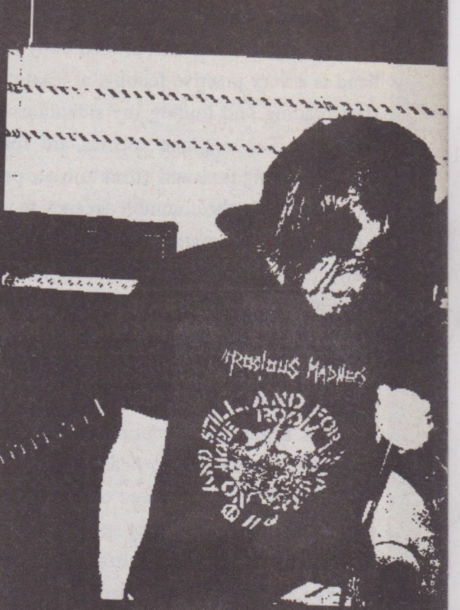
MERCILESS GAME



These days I always hear punks saying that no one care about paper zines, be they punk zines, small zines, or cut-and-paste-and-photocopied zines. Old punks say that there used to be so many zines before, and that now everybody is doing webzines. Well, maybe I'm not living on the same planet or something, but I am always discovering some new, amazing, and inspiring punk zine, or getting a new issue of a zine that I love. Maybe some distros don't give a fuck and refuse to carry zines, or maybe some people would rather buy a beer than the new issue of *Attitude Problem*, but if you look hard enough (and really it's not that hard), you'll soon find hundreds of awesome DIY publications, and each of them will lead you to discovering new ones. I've decided to try doing some zine-related interviews for *MRR* in an attempt to help people get interested in some of them. Here is an interview with Henke, publisher of *Merciless Game* (ex-*Cancer*), a great zine from Sweden which is written in English and is all about raw punk, scissors, glue, and having no faith in humanity. Interview by Alex Simon.

MRR : Hello Henke, can you introduce yourself and tell the *MRR* readers what you do in your daily life? What are your passions and hobbies? What do you hate the most in this world? What do you love the most?

Henke: OK, my daily life consists—unfortunately—of working as a mailman for Citymail, a private postal company. Needless to say, it's a source for endless frustration, angst and stress. It does help me write lyrics though. My spare-time is spent cooking, playing records, rehearsing, reading a lot of books (preferably fantasy or "fact" books), hanging out with friends, and watching a good deal of horror-films and Simpsons episodes. On rare occasions I spend hours painting fantasy miniatures. In all this I also find time to publish a zine. I love my friends and family, and cooking as well, and as unoriginal as it is, I hate my job, or rather, I hate my job when we get a lot of mail.

MRR : When did you read your first punk zine, and what was it? How and when did you decide to start your zine? What was your goal, and has it changed over time?

H: I think the first zine I read was either *Mitt I Skiten* (which was a friend's zine) or *Sika Äpärä*. Profane Existence was the first non-Swedish zine I read. I was pretty amazed and amused by *Sika Äpärä*, and found *Mitt I Skiten* to be inspiring. The editor of *Mitt I Skiten* happened to sing in the band I was playing with at the time, and me and the drummer decided to do a zine together (he had previously tried making one but never finished it), so that's how *Up The Punks* was born. I think our goal was just to do zine, which was enough at the time. My goal now might be an slight alteration of that, but I mainly do my zine to express my point of view, and to feature bands and individuals I find interesting.

MRR : When did you start doing *Merciless Game* zine? It was called *Cancer* before, why the change of name? Can you tell us why and how you choose those names for your zine?

H: Yes, *Merciless Game* was called *Cancer* before (actually, next issue of *Cancer* will be called *Merciless Game* since I have yet to publish an issue under that title). I started *Cancer* in 2000, I had previously done a zine called *Past Midnight* (the English continuation of *Up The Punks*) but had grown disillusioned and jaded with the current punk scene I disbanded *Past Midnight* in spring 2000. Being stuck in a new city with hardly any friends, and spending a lot of time alone I felt the urge to do something constructive again. I was very fed up with hardcore music at the time, and was more interesting in spotlighting gloomy, slow, and misanthropic music and views. Getting to interview DYSTOPIA live in Jönköping pretty much started the whole thing again. *Cancer* was chosen because at the time I was very tired with humans, society and all, and harboured a very bleak, pessimistic opinion of everything, so the name suited me well. By issue number two of *Cancer*, however, I was already falling in love again with hardcore and feeling more positive and optimistic—so the name change is well in time. I don't really have the same intentions with the zine that I had with *Cancer*. For example, the musical genre I wanted to focus on doesn't really appeal in the same way and I'm in general not quite gloomy anymore.

MRR : How would you explain what is a zine to someone who doesn't know shit about it? Where do you draw the line between a "zine" and a "magazine"?

H: When I've mentioned the zine to non-punk friends, parents and co-workers (often reluctantly), I've generally described it as a "small magazine." I think it's quite accurate too. Of course, one could divulge in the whole "doing it myself" bit, which I constantly have to whenever my parents ask me about it, since they find the economical aspect to be most important. If one would make a distinction between a zine and magazine, I'd say that the purpose of the magazine is to sell—to reach and "satisfy" it's target-group. A zine (or fanzine, referring here to the editor, being a fan of his/her zine) doesn't generally, and shouldn't, try to "satisfy" a target-group—it exists to satisfy the producer, not the consumer. Obviously, we all make some small compromises; otherwise the print run would generally end at one.

MRR : What are the best, most positive aspects of doing a zine for you? And the worst ones?

H: I like getting stuck in with the zine, whether it's cut and gluing the layout, or doing it on a computer, transcribing a mail or live interview, or selecting and scanning photos. It all brings me alive and fills me with joy. I get the feeling that I'm doing something, and that I leave a footprint in this world. Holding the actually finished and printed copy in my hand is a very positive feeling, at least until I start reading and finding my ridiculous misspellings. The negative aspects are for me mostly wasting time and effort to write people who don't have the common decency to reply. I can't stress it enough that every time I, or another zine editor, writes someone for an interview we invest time, energy and often money for stamps, and return postage in this. To not even get a "Hi, sorry we just don't have time to answer" reply is, in my eyes, a bit arrogant. It fucks with your plans when you sit and wait 'til deadline to hear from someone who doesn't reply. I'm tired of hearing about people saying that they get so much mail, do so much, etc. It takes a maximum of one minute to do what I mentioned, and I'd appreciate that effort a lot. If you can't be fucking bothered, don't fucking print your address or encourage people to write! Oh, I guess dealing with distros who wants fuck-all to do with zines is one of the worst aspects too. Mainly because you get the feeling that it's just some simple hobby or something. I bet most editors invest as much time and energy in their zines as most of the records you sell.

MRR : Very often, your personal writings have a misanthropic, anti-humanity feel. Do you consider yourself a negative person? Do you really have no hope for the human race? I have the feeling that sometimes the punks use this anti-humanity attitude as an excuse for not giving a shit about anything in this world and being passive, and us stuff like, "Why should I make efforts to make things better, the world sucks anyway" as excuses for being lazy. What do you think of that?

H: I harbor very little faith in the aspect that mankind one day as a collective will recognize the harm they subject nature and other living beings too, and change their actions into being in harmony with this world. I think we have gone too far. We might make larger adaptations, but civilization as we know it can only be described as a plague. So no, I don't have any hope for the human race—at large. I think there is plenty of room for individual adaptations and realizations. It's very inspiring to learn of people who turn away from this consuming culture, be it through their diet, their transportation, how they live, etc. I realize that we can only do so much, and that striving for a change is a merit indeed. I've never, ever, claimed that just because the human race is fucked up, we shouldn't make an effort. I find the attitude to be a cop-out, in the same line as those who consider the human race to be above nature and animals. Even if I think we're fucked, I'd love to be proven wrong. Please, make an effort!

MRR : Lots of people seems to think that the zine culture is dying nowadays, especially punk music zines. Do you agree or not? What do you think of political or personal zines, do you read any? I personally think that the most political thing about zines is their independence, and the act of doing something yourself and taking back a little control on your own life. Thus, every zine is inherently political, no matter the content. Do you agree or not?

H: I'm bound to agree with you, at least partially, that the inherent political aspect of publishing and producing something by yourself. I have no problem with either personal or political zines as long as people manage to capture my interest somehow. For example, I wouldn't really be interested in reading a political zine of a right-wing persuasion. I would have little interest to read a personal zine focusing on, say, poetry. I'd say that most smaller punk-zines (stuff that isn't *Short Fast and Loud*, *Profane Existence*, *Reason To Believe*) are personal zines, and I read a lot of those. I don't know if the zine-scene is really dying, but I feel that there is too many zines out there that have very little effort invested in them. There are a lot of newssheets etc, and they just seem like a waste of time. Sometimes I think it's to easy for people to make zines, with computer-programs for layout, email, scamming xerox-copies at school or work, etc. I think it's quite easy to spot the zines that have a genuine effort invested in them, and those that are made just to kill time.

MRR: What are your favorites zines at the moment?

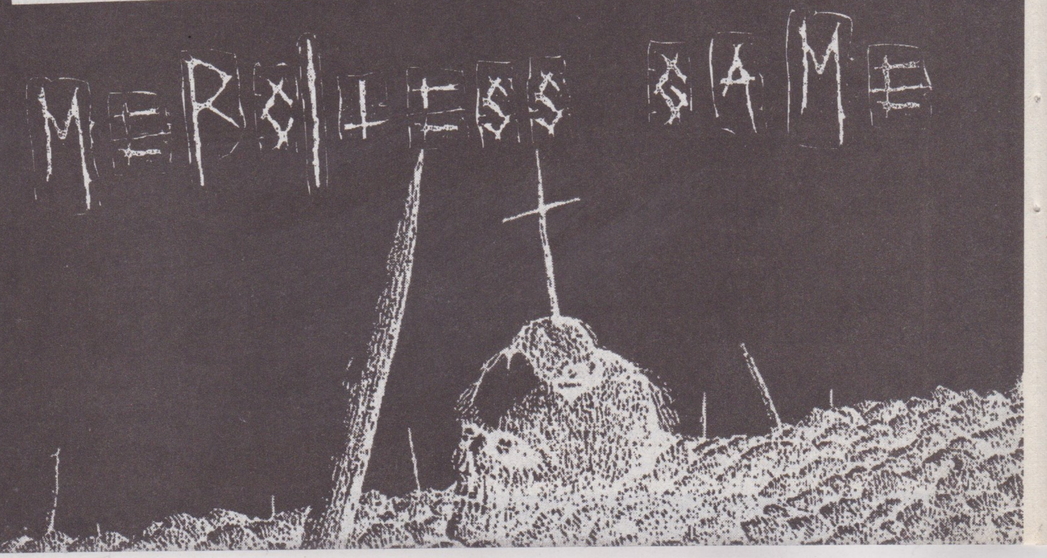
H: At the moment, I wish there would be a new issue of *Slug & Lettuce, Warning, Kängnäve, HDHC, Diminutive Rage, Profane Existence, Aborted Society, Attitude Problem and Gimme Danger*! on my doormat when I get back home from work.

MRR : What are your projects? Can you tell us a little about your band MARERIDT?

H: MARERIDT is a five-man Scandi-crust mangel noise attack from DK/SWE. We put out a demo tape earlier this summer (June), which still can be ordered from Plague Bearer c/o Kick'n'Punch out of Copenhagen/Denmark (and also available from Another world is possible—all money from this edition goes to incarcerated anti-war protesters). There are plans for recording a split EP with PEACEFULL COLLAPSE from Tokyo in September, and another split with VISIONS OF WAR to be recorded later. Hopefully some shows later this year as well. I'm also involved in KAMPHUNDER ÖVERALLT, a SORE THROAT/ANAL CUNT-ish project, we're recording later this month and we'll see how that turns out.

MRR : If you knew that the world was gonna explode tomorrow, what would you do today?

H: I guess I would listen to as many of my favourite records as I could, steal and cook a lot of good food, drink some beers and some Jolt Cola, smoke some weed, find someone interested in consensual sexual activities and engage in that. And probable tell my boss to take this fucking job and shove it! Cheers for the interview Alex! People interested in the zine can order back-issues of *Cancer* (#2&3) for $4 ppd everywhere. *Merciless Game* #4 is due after my vacation in the States, look for ads in October. *Cancer* / *Merciless Game* / MARERIDT can be contacted at:
c/o Henke Liljegren / Västra Kattarpsvägen 10A / 213 61 Malmö / SWEDEN
h_midnight@hotmail.com



BAD BUSINESS

is the quintessential modern punk-hardcore band. When the music they grew up on grew boring and stale, they formed a band. With dedication towards intense, energy-driven live shows, and spicing their songs with elements from every facet of music, they have built a reputation as the most honest, fun-loving band in upstate New York.

MRR: Give a brief history of BAD BUSINESS. How did you form, and what have you been doing since then.

Dan: BAD BUSINESS was conceived in the very beginning of December 2001. The idea was spawned while me and Jeff lived together at Rochester Institute of Technology and Brandon had been living with us for about two months. One night me, Jeff, Brandon and Linsay all went to Olive Garden for dinner. We all agreed that there weren't any bands in Rochester playing the kind of hardcore punk that we wanted to play. And there weren't any straight edge bands. So we decided to try and start a band that had elements of hard mosh, wig-out punk, and fast thrash, and that we would ask Shawn Creeden to be our singer

MRR: What is BAD BUSINESS doing that makes you stand out from what some would call the tired and stagnant punk/hardcore scene? What sets you apart from the rest? Is there anything you consider BAD BUSINESS to be pioneering?

Shawn: I think that our songs are not predictable, and that we are being honest and having fun (sometimes fun isn't the right word), and—especially when we play live—it seems that people who aren't even into hardcore in any way can appreciate what we do on some level. Something that we've done a little and I'd like to see more of is us playing on more diversified bills. We play a lot of basement punk shows, and shows with other hardcore bands, which rules. But we are all into different music and it is nice when every band is not screaming in your face. In those rare cases, each performer stands out a little more for the type of music they play. I think about what we are doing a lot. And I wonder what people in other bands think about what they are doing. Does MENTAL or HATEBREED or BLINK 182 have the same amount of fun and think about the things we do? I think the guys in BLINK 182 might, those dudes seem to have a lot of fun. Pioneering? We are not out to alienate anyone, and I think that is a novel idea in hardcore and punk, which are scenes that are so rooted in exclusion. Today, that is even more prevalent I think, along with at the same time a weird sort of fraternal inclusion. I don't know if that's true, I'll think about it, but I can't

think of anyone who I wouldn't want to listen to us. I'm sure there are people who don't like us and that is good. On second thought, I don't know how to answer this question except to say that we are #1!
Motion: I think BAD BUSINESS takes inspiration from a lot of non-punk (and non-musical) sources, which makes us stand out creatively maybe, but I don't think we are necessarily pioneering anything new—lots of bands were creative and punk before us. I think we come to this band with a clear sense of passion and humility that people see and respond very positively to.
Brandon: The thing I would say BAD BUSINESS is doing a little differently is looking to things besides other hardcore bands for influence. We then apply the things we find to the "fast hardcore" or "thrash" or "punk" formula that seems to exist. There are other newer bands that seem to be taking this approach as well. People used to describe the SUICIDE FILE to me as a "rock and roll hardcore band." I would say that in describing BAD BUSINESS you could say we are a "_______ hardcore band," but I don't know what would be in the blank because we are kind of all over the place.
MRR: What changes have occurred with the band since day one?
Shawn: We replaced Brandon with a robot because the band came second on his list of priorities after masturbating, but that plan backfired because the robot Brandon is even hornier than flesh Brandon. Other than that, I can't think of anything, new guitars and bass heads. I haven't been replaced yet, which comes as sort of a surprise to me.
Motion: When BAD BUSINESS started, we were 100% straightedge, and 100% virgin. Those figures are no longer accurate… but where, you ask...?
Shawn: Weren't we all diehard vegans too?
MRR: What have you learned about punk/hardcore from playing shows and touring?
Shawn: The Midwest is a great place. You know, you hear that the earth is "so flat" out there, and you're like "yeah, whatever the earth is basically flat everywhere" but then you get out there and the shit is seriously fucking flat as fuck. And there are no trees so the sky is huge. When I came back, I was all, "trees? What the fuck?" There are endless things to laugh about out there—mostly pronunciation/dialect related. Kids are nice too. And they never see the ocean. I love the guys in this band. When it came down to it on tour, there were absolutely no problems. Maybe Dan would get pissed when Brandon and I wanted to listen to both Gram Parsons albums in a row or Jeff and I put in some delicate Bach for a long drive. But no real problems. I learned touring is the best thing ever.
Brandon: I've learned that what is popular in hardcore, whether it be more punk or metal based, is different in different areas. It seems that in the South there is a more metally or moshy scene and a smaller fast punk/hardcore scene, but it seems that in the North it is the opposite, we seem to get a good reaction from both camps because I guess we are somewhere in between. I like certain aspects of both, so it's nice to play in the different areas.
Motion: By the end of a long tour, you long for home and the comfort of your own bed. By the end of a long week at home, you long for the road and your sleeping bag.
MRR: Give a title/role to another member. Brandon give a role to Dan. Dan, give a role to Creeden. Creeden give a role to Motion. Motion give a role to Brandon. (I hope this makes sense)
Shawn: Motion is the thick rope tether that keeps the hot-air balloon of my idealism and endless daydream fantasies from taking me out over the all-too-real ocean of disappointment. He is the level head who, when I am psyching myself up and losing control a little, steps in and is like "you know, this is our first time doing this or that or playing here and it's probably not going to be all that crazy." He is practical, and that is an important balance for me especially, because sometimes it is hard for me to stop dreaming or tell the difference between fantasy and reality. Then, when he is wrong and I am right it is so sweet. And he is definitely not like that all the time, in a downer way, just when it is needed, in an experienced friendly protective way. If there was a BAD BUSINESS tour DVD made, you'd probably see a lot of Jeff doing things like eating bulk snack food or popcorn and shrugging when things go wrong with the show or a fight breaks out then continuing a conversation about the romantic composers.
Brandon: Dan is the business prowess in the

band. He comes up with lots of song ideas, and he also does the booking stuff and the financial spreadsheets and PowerPoint presentations.
Dan: Shawn is what makes the band crazy, and on the edge. He is coming up with crazy ideas for songs, shirts, and posters. Shawn either intentionally or unintentionally shakes up the band, and keeps us on our toes.
Motion: Brandon is the Innovator. He never fails to come up with ideas that force me to rethink the way we write songs.

MRR: Regarding lyrical content, what are you trying to accomplish? Are there any predominant messages you are trying to get across?

Shawn: The early songs were more outwardly directed, coworkers, friends, making a list of reasons to justify a choice I unconsciously make everyday, things I wanted to say either before I died or so I could move past them. Now my lyrics are more about working out for myself things that happen in my life or in my head. They are nuch more about my personal paranoias and about situations without resolutions. Also change, and how I don't feel that things can be understood properly as absolutes, like absolute truth. Some vocalists who have inspired me recently are people like Jason Molina of SONGS: OHIA, Sam Beam of IRON AND WINE, Wes Eisold of GIVE UP THE GHOST/SOME GIRLS, Dave Weinberg of the SUICIDE FILE, and Jamie Stewart from XIU XIU. My songs are not meant to be anthems, and I will probably never write one. I want to write songs that are so personal that they become difficult to perform or to listen to. Bringing things to a level of challenging that it takes all of my effort just to gather the strength to share who I am and what I really think with someone else, that is what I feel I need to do. People probably won't care, but oh well. This last show we just played (with the AVRAM, NO SWEAT, HEDAYA, DRAGNET, and ACHILLES in Rochester) was as close to my ideal performance as I think we have ever come. It is often hard to make it through a set, and that is how I know I am on the right track.

MRR: What response has BAD BUSINESS received locally, and how does that compare with the response further from home?

Shawn: Playing in Rochester is great. There are kids who have been to every single NY show we've ever played, and there are always new faces with kids going insane. I love it. We've been talking about this lately. When we go out on tour, we go alone. We don't hop on a bigger band's tour. We have a hard time with name recognition and draw, but I don't think we've ever played a show where I feel we've disappointed the people who did come out. The next time we come through a town there will be twice as many kids who heard about us through their friends. We are a round two band in that way.
Brandon: Our shows in Rochester, Syracuse, Buffalo and any other towns in this part of New York have been great. Lots of singing along and dancing and having fun, which is what we like. I don't think we have the name draw in places far from home. Usually even if the shows are smaller though, the kids that are there have a good time and dance and some sing along if they know the words. We usually get positive feedback from most people who talk to us after the show. We have heard that people say they wish they had gone to the shows on their city's message board after hearing about it or listening to the record. We love playing and want to always have a good time whether there are ten kids or a hundred, and promote fun at all our shows.
Dan: The only place that is as crazy as Rochester is St. Louis. Those kids were going crazy when we played there last winter. Chicago was awesome too.

What is the most important band in punk rock today? Why?

Dan: For me it is DILLINGER FOUR. I have loved this band since my cousin gave me *Midwestern Songs* on Christmas in 1998. And at first I was just in love with the pop-punk songs themselves. I assumed these were just old dudes playing poppy punk music, but didn't really figure them for much in the way of credibility. Then I started reading their lyrics, and got more of their records, and saw them live, and I began to respect them so much more. I think this band has through the years maintained a constant sound and belief system that hasn't seemed to falter or change. Some people might consider that stagnant, but I think they are still as fresh as the day I heard them, and I respect that more than anything.
Motion: To me, the most important bands in punk are the ones with something earnest, or brutally honest to say. I have a hard time singling out one specific band, but bands like TRAGEDY, FROM ASHES RISE, and BANE can make me feel unlike any other I've seen. They never fail to floor me every time I put on any of their records or see them live.

MRR: How does an art show (Shawn and others?) compare with the performance art of a live show?

Shawn: It's similar in a lot of ways. Making work is essential for me, and showing is a part of that. I always wonder what people think, just to know how it is being interpreted. I approach both similarly so most of the stuff I've said about BAD BUSINESS applies to my work. Details, intimacy, honesty, vulnerability. I've been attempting to connect the two lately. I bring my drawings to shows and set them out for people to look at and talk to me about and buy if they like.
Motion: What is amazing (and probably sounds totally stupid) is that certain art can leave me feeling as beaten up as being at the bottom of a 20 person pile on, while at the same time seeing certain bands can leave me as calm as seeing something like Monet at Giverny. I think it all depends on your stance on art. Music to me is an art, so I feel it makes sense that they can both make me experience similar emotions or reactions.

MRR: In complete honesty, what is the realistic future of the band?

Shawn: We will try harder. We will have fun
Dan: Three quarters of us are graduating by the springtime. And it looks like those three quarters are fleeing (have fled) Rochester, which will make doing the band kind of difficult. We will cross that bridge when we get to it.
Brandon: It will be rough for the next two years or so, I'll still be in school, Jeff and Dan will be in Baltimore working, and Shawn will be riding the rails and panhandling. We will keep writing songs and practicing and playing shows here and there and hopefully recording stuff. It just won't be as full speed ahead as it could be.
Motion: We will continue to play rock music until simply one of us doesn't want to do it anymore. It doesn't matter where we are, or what we are doing. When it's time to be done, someone will speak up.

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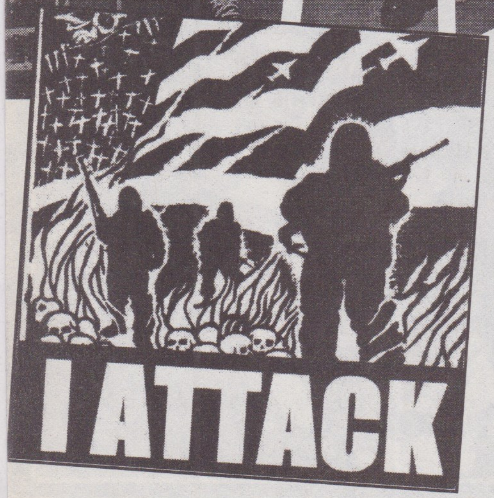
I ATTACK

Hailing from the south side, I ATTACK has been around for a couple of years in Chicago's punk and hardcore scene, and they have been ripping it continuously. The band's energy and realness parallels the city itself, and I ATTACK is a perfect candidate to get the word of Chicago hardcore punk out to the coasts and across the globe. The band members' ages is proof that punk rock never dies, as long as punk rockers of all ages keep it alive and keep it real. I met up with the band on the DePaul University campus prior to a show. They had McDonald's in their stomachs and light beers in hand. They even offered one without asking for an I.D. The band was missing a guitarist, Jose, but still ripped it up. Jose will however, get a line on the chalkboard for this one.

Interview by Dick Deadly and "do you get your students into punk rock" question by Terra James.



MRR: All right, I'm gonna need everyone's names, ages, favorite bands, and favorite drugs.

I Attack: Drugs? Damn, drugs (laughs). How many tapes you got? Free drugs.

Rob: I'm Robert (vocals) Villanueva. (he spells his last name)

Dan: Don't go spelling it.

Rob: Hey, some people can't spell that shit. They put a 'z' and a 'b' in there. And I'm 28. I like a lot of the old early L.A. bands; O.C., Black Flag, Adolescents, stuff like that. I like all punk, really.

Dan: Let's keep it simple, it's one question.

MRR: Favorite drugs?

Rob: Beer. Just beer for me. Or free! Actually, put free. Free is my favorite drug.

Dan: I'm Dan, I play drums. I'm 32. And favorite bands, too many to name. But I like anything that's good to the ear, in my ear that is. So it could be anything from polka to Slayer. As long as I like it and it rocks, I'll listen to it, and it's real. (beer can opens)

Rob: Bands come and go man. It's what they leave behind, you know, I think. So it's kinda hard to say...

Dan: ...Drugs? Um.

Rob: Free drugs (chuckles)

Dan: No favorite ones, just...

Rob: Free.

Dan: Whatever, ah ... I go with the flow.

MRR: The pyramid?

Dan: Yeah.

MRR: Like the basic food groups?

Dan: Pretty much, yeah. There you go. (laughs) I don't know, no ... there's no favorites, it's just sorta...

Rob: Apples and oranges

Dan: Right, vegetables and oranges.

Juan: I'm Juan, I play bass. I'm 32 years old also. First music I pretty much listen to anything I think the only thing that's been coming in & out of my cd player a lot is uh, the newest Ozo Matli record. They're like uh ah, some fuckin Chicano shit comin out of L.A., but they're the shit. And um, as far as drugs, pretty much everything.

Raul: I'm Raul. I play guitar I'm 37 years old. Favorite bands, anything I started listening to in the early 80's, so...

Rob: He can't remember.

Raul: That was my influence, all these old bands.

Dan: He's too old, he can't remember. (Rob chuckles)

Rob: I like The Alzheimer's Disease. (all laugh)

MRR: Why should people buy your record?

Rob: We put a lot into it. A lot of like genuine ... genuine lyrics, genuine music, genuine time, and we're still paying the price for it. I mean, I don't mean like financially.

Dan: Well, nobody should buy it in general, but ah...

Rob: Check it out.

Dan: People who are interested in something that's raw and real and not, you know ... there's no...

Rob: It's honest.

Dan: Yeah, there's nothing...there's no bullshit about it. It's just straight up hardcore punk.

MRR: How do you feel about punk rock in Chicago?

Rob: It's better than it has been in a long time.

Dan: It's going...everything goes through...I believe everything goes through like a circle and it's coming back around again in Chicago, so it's going through that ... it's a good phase.

Rob: All the factions are breaking down and starting to group together in a true sense of like the word unity, you know? You see a lot of people talk about it, but no one really is about it. I think, ah as far as...

Dan: And alternative is finally dead, I think. (laughs)

Rob: Nah, it still exists in some places. We haven't been to the college towns yet.

MRR: Do you have any day jobs?

Raul: Lookin for one, you got one? (all laugh)

Dan: His job is to watch all the soaps in the morning.

Rob: Check our email.

Dan: And check our email. Uh, yeah, I got a 9-5 job, pretty much. I'm an on-call service tech so I work any time of the day, if I'm called, you know.

Juan: I work for an art gallery.

MRR: What do you do?

Juan: Anything, mostly its just deliveries for these people and I just go to rich people's houses and (makes hammer and nail motion and sound) fuckin put a nail in the wall and hang up their fuckin work. Or and then, you know, they got shit from...

Rob: And then he gigolos, dude, on the side. (laughs)

Dan: And he drinks wine.

MRR: Do you get to appreciate the art?

Juan: No, it's commercial bullshit, dude.

MRR: Can you tell me about your experience in making a record?

Dan & Rob: Tedious. (both chuckle)

Dan: It makes you hate your music, like right away. Because you gotta do it over and over and over. But actually, we didn't really have to go through that much, because we did it like live, but umm...

MRR: You just cranked em out?

Dan: And that's yeah the thing, that was my best experience on that because I recorded with other bands, but this time around I did it live like that and it worked out well. You know, it was a real...

Rob: I wish we could have had a couple more days though.

Dan: I mean it captured the whole thing at once, you know, like a show. I mean it wasn't a show, but it was like live.

Rob: I'm a schoolteacher, by the way.

MRR: You're a schoolteacher?

Juan: Liar.

Dan: That fuckin question was like twenty minutes ago.

Rob: No, I teach like fuckin art school.

MRR: Where?

Rob: At Marwen. Give them the plug. I'm a T.A., but I still get to teach. I get to work with kids. Marwen University in Chicago. Other than that, I'm a full time dad. When my girlfriend's not kicking me out of the house. (laughs)

MRR: Do you try to introduce your students to punk rock?

Rob: Nah, they introduce me to it.

MRR: What defines making it?

Juan: Getting to hang with Snoop Dogg.

MRR: What defines selling out?

Dan: Selling out is when Rob takes all the door money...

Juan: Snoop Dogg cameos. (laughs)

Dan: ...and doesn't fuckin split it with the band and he's drinkin.

Rob: No, full breed dogs. (laughs) Pure breed dogs, dude. That's selling out. (all laugh)

MRR: What's the best band noone's heard of?

Rob: STARTING POINT (hummuscide.com)

Juan: They played before us. They were the shit.

Dan: Yeah, but they were a nü metal band.

Juan: They were the shit, though.

Rob: They were dope.

Dan: There was a Chinese girl singing and she was just like

Rob: She fuckin blew every vocalist...(away, I hope?)

Dan: ...and we were just 'whoa'!

Dan: At the Transmission Gallery.

Rob: ...kick ass guitars.

Dan: For me, it would be this past weekend, DISROBE. I don't think too many people have heard of them, and they just fuckin tore it up.

Rob: Yeah DISROBE for sure man.

Dan: Total hardcore band.

MRR: How has punk rock changed or saved your life?

(Dan and Rob get into spiels and try to talk over each other. They Raul starts talking for the first time in fifteen minutes and everyone gets quiet)

Raul: I think any kind of music but specifically punk with me, and I owe a lot of thanks to my dad because my dad used to work at the Aragon [Ballroom].

Rob: This guy got to see Devo when he was like, five (chuckles)

Dan: Scorps.

Raul: And that started getting me into it, and at that time, I was bangin.

(dirty thoughts cross my mind)

Raul: (seeing my confusion) Like in a street gang.

MRR: Ohh, I thought you meant like girls. (all laugh)

Dan: Remember, he's 37 years old.

Raul: It's nice to be a gangbanger and ... looking into that music, trying to play, just took me away from it. And that's what I still think with all these kids...I just want to push music, not just punk, but any kind of music.

Dan: It gives you better motive.

MRR: (to Rob): What are your favorite skate spots in the city?

Rob: The whole city. Downtown, man, the loop.

Dan: I like the places where they're skatin on the edge and they trip over where they have a skate guard...(laughs) and they fall on their face.

MRR: What are your future plans?

Dan: To probably do a backup, a follow up record to the first I ATTACK, you know? Just see what evolves from that. Keep it going.

Rob: Definitely something with a keyboard (I can't tell if he's serious or not and don't ask).

Juan: I'm gonna be a CEO in a large company that takes advantage of third world countries. (all laugh)

Dan: So I could shoot him.

MRR: (to Raul) Any for you?

Raul: Naw. (all laugh)

Dan: He's gonna be still answering our email.

MRR: What makes you happy?

Juan: (under his breath) Drugs. Naw.

Dan: Coming out here tonight, and...

MRR: I want to make a note that you brushed your nose as you said "drugs." (all laugh)

Dan: Yeah, that's the aftermath. No, what makes me happy is coming out here tonight and playing this show and I don't gotta sit on my couch and do nothing. So I'm being productive and entertaining somebody.

Rob: Productivity. Genuine slam dancing.

Juan: Just the age that I'm doing this, you know?

Dan: Just...and I'm here to tear it up.

Rob: Skating. Changing dirty diapers.

Dan: I'm here to tear it up, I don't give a fuck if there's two people or five people. We're here to do our set.

Rob: My baby girl smiling in my face, that's what makes me happy. And genuine slam dancing.

Juan: Aww.

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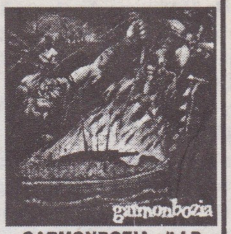

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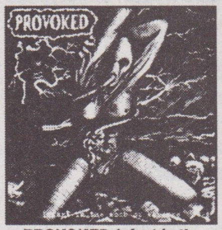

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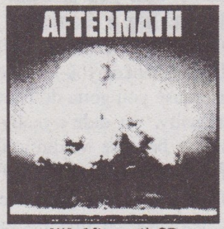

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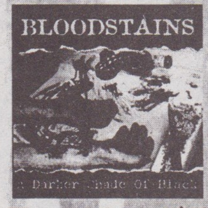

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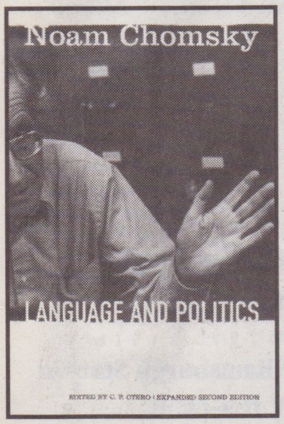


Language and Politics
Noam Chomsky;
edited by C.P. Otero;
expanded Second Edition.
802 pages * $28
AK Press * 674-A 23rd Street
Oakland, CA 94612-1163

Chomsky doesn't have to give a shit. He could sit back in his MIT office, focus solely on linguistics and garner even more books, awards & praise. "I really had a pleasant life," he wryly explains of his early academic success. "I've never particularly enjoyed demonstrations, or being maced or tear gassed. I never thought that was great fun." Thankfully, he made a decision early on to not take the privileged way out and instead remarks: "Commitment to work on the problems of racism, oppression, imperialism, and so on, is in the United States an absolute necessity. Now exactly how can one maintain that sort of schizophrenic existence I am not sure; it is very difficult."

Much like most of us don't have to care about U.S. foreign policy. We can rock out to our precious 7"s, gossip amidst safe friends, and leave the reality of American bombs with our empty beer cans. It is "very difficult" to lead a passionate, active life that's not in denial of the patriot acts. For me, anyway, books help. *Language and Politics* commemorates Chomsky's 60th birthday with 800+ pages of interviews, bookending the uprisings of 1968 and the 9/11 signifier. Interviews remain the most readerly format—a not-too-intimidating dialogue, with small breathers between the chapters. The interviews unfold chronologically, under 58 broad headings from *The Intellectual as Prophet* to *Marxism, Anarchism and Possible Futures.* Given the wealth of topics, the interviews here help humanize the rather intimidating presence of both current history and the man that tends to get a blanket hero-worship. Chomsky's consistent, rational voice helps, whether you're reading the pieces in order or jumping around.

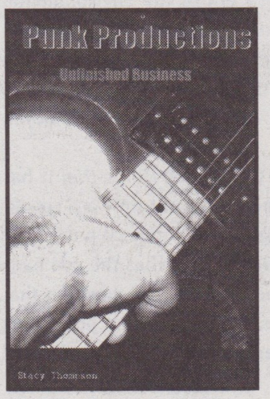
There are still some valid claims that Chomsky is abstruse, too much to read, can talk for hours about a single topic, *etc.* And I know that you don't need a book to realize how fucked up the Iraq wars are, or how American foreign policy is about the same as pissing on the rest of the world. The footnotes and bibliography are here for the scholars & time-rich. Making the forthrightness of these interviews as perversely refreshing as closing your book & taking a walk outside. Freedom and responsibility remain recurrent, timeless themes.

I won't deny that Chomsky is a scientist, linguist and professor as much as he's an activist. If that's a turnoff, that's totally fine. Linguistic nerds will enjoy the debates about innate ideas, universal grammar & foreign language acquisition. I can appreciate the greater ramifications in scientific principals (whether or not humans are behaviorist, if empirical truth exists, etc.), but most of the language & philosophy stuff left me cold. The role of academics and intellectuals, however, stays compelling. Chomsky links Einstein and the pursuit of knowledge with the struggle for justice and independence, a far cry from the stereotypical "neutral" scientist stance. Or, as astute editor CP Otero points out: *"Most revolutionary scientists & thinkers, however, have excelled only along the intellectual dimension—they do not appear to have been supergifted along the moral dimension."* Some are willing to rise above.

This book is further valuable in grounding Chomsky (you know, the human being, not the critical force) in his background & influences: growing up amidst the Depression, Hiroshima and the Spanish Civil War; coming of age in Philadelphia's lively "Jewish working-class culture" and vocal progressive circles. At 13 he was taking trains to New York to participate in his uncle's socialist debates. Which makes sense when as an adult he makes a conscious choice to not take the easy, pampered route as successful academic and sheltered American.

But do I read this many interviews in a row? *Hell no.* I wouldn't read that many Morrissey or Flannery O'Connor interviews in a year's time. It's simply too much, even in these bleak times. I had to read this one in small, measured bits, and certainly not right before bed. So pace yourself, friends, or like too many vegan white Russian (or root beer) shots, you might not feel like getting up again.

-Travis Fristoe.



Punk Productions:
Unfinished Business
Stacy Thompson
215 pages * $19.95
State University of New York Press
90 State St. Suite 700
Albany, NY 12207
www.sunypress.edu

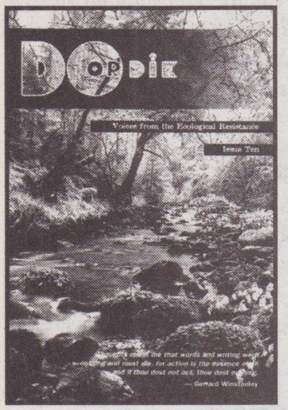
Stacy Thompson's Punk Productions offers both a history of punk and a social & material analysis of punk which is primarily Marxist. The book claims to "explore all of the major punk scenes in detail." While I don't agree with this claim, the areas she covers she does so very thoroughly. Her analysis involves punk aesthetics, discussing principles as opposed to style. I probably would have been really stoked on this book 10 years ago when I was a smarty-pants sociology major. The tone is academic, and the intended audience doesn't seem to be a punk one. The book rests heavily on the premise of "punk's ultimate goal of abolishing capitalism" and cites several independent labels as examples of failure in this respect, but also as successes in their opposition to the music industry in general.

The first chapter gives in-depth histories of the following scenes: New York 74-76, England 78-78, California hardcore 78-82, Washing D.C. hardcore 79-85, New York hardcore 86-89, riot girl 91-95, and Berkeley pop-punk 90-95. Thompson's description of these scenes is really detailed. I wouldn't necessarily choose each of these as the most important or influential punk scenes, however. I also think that it is problematic to define each scene in terms of time frame & geography in some cases so strictly. This makes each area easier to categorize, but I found that it downplayed the interconnected nature of each of these scene and the overlap and fluidity.

Chapter two discusses the economies developed within anarcho-punk movements and includes Crass, Profane Existence, and Crimethinc. Chapter three includes discussions of the contradiction between opposing capitalism

& participating in it, record collecting, the preference of vinyl, and how the exchange of the punk commodities build community. Chapter four also deals with the contradiction between opposing capitalism & participating in it, and uses Dischord Records and Lookout! Records as examples of attempts to establish businesses that differ from major labels. These are pretty interesting discussions, but I think that the premise that Thompson's is flawed. Punk is too varied to make this claim, & if this claim is considered a given, of course punk is deemed a failure in this respect. Thompson does grant that different punk endeavors have set up systems of exchange that offered an alternative to the music industry, with varying degrees of success. Punk Productions is a well-researched and thorough book, but ultimately I can't get behind a claim that reduces punk to one primary motivation.

—Tress



Do or Die — Voices from the Ecological Resistance #10
Do or Die Collective
382 pages
Prior House
6 Tilbury Place
Brighton BN2 2GY, United Kingdom

Nicely prefaced by a collective suicide note this final issue of *Do or Die!* is the last word in the Earth First! era of the environmental movement. *Do or Die!* has its roots firmly in this movement; up to issue 7 was subtitled *Voices from Earth First!* The story behind the unfortunate death of *Do or Die!* and the environmental movement (of which Earth First! represents a high point) is worth some examination. The end of the Direct Action era is upon us.

While the Do or Die-ers give no reason for the end of *Do or Die!* it has been clear for some time that their project **is** the movement they are speaking of more than a mere report on it. This, alongside the financial poverty of any project the scale of *Do or Die!* (which this time approaches the 400 page mark), makes the reasons for stopping the project evident. The question that hangs over this closing paragraph is one that should haunt any publishing project; does the documentation of the movement provide a slow chokehold on it, or is it a necessary part of it?

Do or Die! has always been an excellent resource. These people have been early adopters of computer aided layout tools with an appropriate eye and the skills to make their vision real. Producing a project that scaled from a smallish perfect bound 'high zine' to the weighty tome of number 10 was the perfect implementation of the strategy of presenting the radical environmental scene complexly. This issue includes a hundred page history of Earth First! in England that is of superlative quality, two hundred pages of action reports and analysis, and a final hundred pages to bookkeeping (zine, book reviews, fiction, contacts and closure).

The story of Earth First! and our reason for arguing that its time has passed (both in the UK and in the US) can best be summed up by the epigram in the inside cover "Do or Die – Digging out the avalanche of capitalism with the spatula of activism since 1992." While a general criticism of activism could be made that implicates Earth First! as a case study, it may be more appropriate in this case to talk about direct action as the ideological and practical tool used by Earth First! Initially entering the stage in the US by their use of tree spikes to protect old growth Redwood forests and dropping a banner (of a crack) at the Glenn Canyon Dam in Arizona, EF! quickly became known for the car that two of its spokespeople were blown up in. In England EF! was known for its squatting (and burrowing) protests of the M11 roadway. Since then EF! has mostly been the publisher of a newspaper and the maintainer of the legacy of a fallen hero and her lawsuits.

Pedogically it is the arc of Earth First! from practitioners of actual destructive practices against the enemies of the Earth to grumpy liberals with acoustic guitars that has transformed it from heroic savior of the last wilderness to another green organization spending more energy, time, and money maintaining itself rather than its project.

Which is why the death of a project as excellent as *Do or Die!* is the right thing. We should attempt to end projects on high notes, looking good, and not continue to ride out a logo, a pile of pithy quotations (and utterly stupid ones), and whatever reserves are left in the till just for the sake of memories. We need to learn how to grow older in resistance and not grow old in habit and repetition. The practices of the past 20 years have kicked our ass, taught us about weak spots, educated us, and then faded in use. We need to learn how to leave them behind as the tired tools that they are. *Do or Die!* is dead!

Long live *Do or Die!*

-Aragorn!

Taqwacores
Michael Muhammad Knight
254 pages * $10
Autonomedia
POB 568 • Williamsburgh Station
Brooklyn , NY 1121-0568

Taqwacore refers to the unlikely genre of Muslim punk rock. "Taqwa," meaning something along the lines of "belief."

The story is told from the perspective of Yusef, a Pakistani college student living in a punk house in Buffalo, New York. Yusef is a square, but his reserved nature and non-judgement allow him unabated insight into the city's thriving Islamic underground. His friends and housemates are all college-aged Muslims struggling to define their spiritual identities with the inherently self-destructive and highly critical tools of the punk ethic. To list but a few of his friends there are: Jehangir, the charismatic and aimless stoner philosopher, Umar, the tattooed straight-edged hardliner, and Rabeya, the woman whose skin was never seen from beneath her covering (her *burqa*) until the end of the book when she does the most ridiculously shocking act that out-punks every other sophomoric, obnoxious, disrespectful (and blasphemous) act of punkness in the book. All the characters bounce off each other in very realistic and human ways. Their arguments and philosophies are somewhat cliché to their respective identities but then that's the joy of being an idealistic 20 year-old.

The story starts slowly giving ample time to paint a picture of the community it follows. Ultimately, a plot to have a Muslim punk festival develops and the story takes its course from there. The climax itself isn't as interesting as the ideas and unanswered questions that come up along the way. It provides good fodder for any reader who is open to contemplating spirituality, if at the very least to argue against it. By having a familiar punk setting it offers ideas and questions in a subtle, non-threatening and conversational way rather than a Mormon-on-your-doorstep way. It has no intention of converting anyone, which made it infinitely more readable. The Muslim punk community (I'm thinking southeast Asia) will likely love this story.

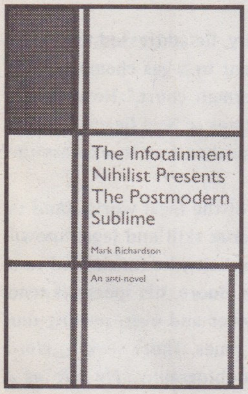
Initially I was intrigued by the concept of a Muslim punk. Being a middle-class honky from California I had little-to-no knowledge of Islam and I could study it with academic fascination. But organized religion is organized religion and a short while into this book I started to wonder if I would have been so accepting if this were a Christian punk story. The answer is yes, but only because it'd be close-minded not to. But it would have bugged me...unless the story was engaging and written well enough. Thankfully, this book is both. Knight drops references from the Stooges and the Dicks to Johnny Cash and Operation Ivy to the Slits and even Moxy Fruvous and "gasp" Dashboard Confessional. I could relate to the music (well, most of it) and ideas and the

universal conflicts of growing up—the Eastern perspective just put a fresh spin on it.

What was difficult though, was how much of the book was in Arabic. Whole pages would go by where I could only rely on context to understand the passage. Other times references were totally over my head. For example, "It was a daily joke as reliable as Zuhr's adhan in Masjid Haram." Or, "I go to Makkah, you go to Najaf because you're a fucking kurf bitch." Like any foreign language you start to pick up on some of the vocab but it ain't easy if you don't already have working knowledge of Arabic or at least a fundamental grasp of Muslim practices and ideas. Knight goes through the trouble of explaining punk and it's different ideas and sects many times and in many ways but since he almost never gives history or interpretations of Islam or Arabic the book's target audience shrinks considerably.

This book would have greater appeal if Knight assumed his audience had no knowledge of punk or Islam. But if Knight is not interested in broadening his audience he should still continue spinning his yarns because he still has a good grasp of story telling and of being provocative.

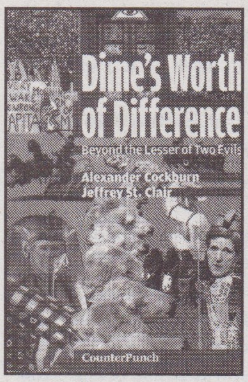
—craigums



The Infotainment Nihilist Presents the Postmodern Sublime.
Mark Richardson
209 pages
PABD — Print and Be Damned
www.pabd.com

There are times when shit rises to the surface. That must be acknowledged. In this case I will express my awareness of this event with an homage. Self-publishing could fucking rock like sex in the Gilman bathroom. Knees filthy, pride and grins when you walk out of the stall, absolute self-awareness. You aren't worth the moment of course as you dry and the relationship fades. Another time it could have been a dream and catastrophe. Take this job and shove it! Slides right off your mind, consciousness isn't what it used to be. How many different ways can we think of shit? Smeared, wiped, dropped, on the sidewalk, in the bedroom, smelling, squirting, We are the Meatmen and you suck!, flung, brown, green, red, runny, rock hard, dripping, leaking, running, as second harvest, dream sequence, smoking, projectile, violence, dancing. If anything can be printed, pressed, released in this postmodern fuck age will the quality of zine culture fill our libraries with Dischord ads and the typography of Microsoft Times New Roman? Utter trash, like some Taxi Driver fantasy girl, or Gold Club for Men. It looks like Rogaine superstars talking down to the audience of wide eyed know-nothings. Can you say Rock! And what is the use of stream of consciousness? Do you really care what is on my mind, your mind, how about the mind of Mark Richardson? Survey says... The truth remains that this is another post-academic, postmodern, post-punk, post-everything useless pile of shit. I honor it by writing this much about it, but an opportunity to really appreciate such drivel comes by only once a day or so. It's hard to pass up a chance to reflect nothing. What is the sound of one hand clapping? How about no hands, ever, ever, ever. There are over 200 pages of nothing here, noise, this is no feeble pop-culture, this is the real thing. Wasted life spending the long month, sweaty body, old television set, Marilyn Monroe poster, craphole room to write this thing? Can't you rent friends by the hour? Once there was hope, then there was Baudrillard. Blowhard, Vegas worshipping, sophisticated pixie-stick philosophy stirred with the stinking winds of French ennui. Failure is not the same as resistance. Internet wisdom only costs $12.65 per book, if you can keep it under 200 pages. Sadly, Mark couldn't handle that bar to entry and therefore if you pay what he paid you're out $14.65. Is .65 the new .99? If we pay the Print and be Damned recommended rate then we are out $18.59! I would like to extend the punch in the face that Mark deserves for writing this to any sucker that pays retail for it. Not only is another one born every minute but they are willing to pay retail for the humiliation of merely opening this 'text'. Insulted intelligence, scorched taste buds, a knee-capping, excruciation, daggers into your eyes, a leap onto punji sticks, bamboo under fingernails, paper cuts on your tongue, and kidney punches all await the simplest traveler into the Postmodern Sublime.

-Aragorn!



Dime's Worth of Difference-Beyond the Lesser of Two Evils
Edited by Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair
$15.95 • 290 pages
AK Press
674A 23rd St.
Oakland, CA 94612-1163

This dynamic duo is back with another compendium of cackling cuts at sacred cows and nasty neo-cons. Cockburn and St. Clair also produce the always-entertaining, always-scathing, and usually right-on magazine *Counterpunch*. While they started out co-writing their books with the classic *Whiteout: the CIA, Drugs, and the Press*, lately they've been compiling fascinating books on specific topics, the last one being *The Politics of Anti-Semitism* from earlier this year. Quick disclosure: I work for Alternative Tentacles, which co-released an audio cd by Alexander Cockburn with AK Press.

This new anthology examines the co-mingling of funders, tactics, ideologies, and practically everything else of the Democrat and Republican Parties. Neither Party comes out smelling very good, but that's to be expected from these two editors. As I write this, we are in the last month of the 2004 Election Season, and the chattering classes are desperately demonstrating the differences between the two major parties. "Anybody But Bush" and "Kerry's Bad but Bush is Worse" does battle with "Kerry is a really good fellow who will fight for the common man." Meanwhile, anyone who breathes a word about the independent Ralph Nader or the Green Party's David Cobb (who, unlike Nader, is running a "safe states" campaign) is instantly pilloried as "wasting one's vote" and being a Bush supporter by default. (Rant unrelated to this review: How we vote is our choice- strategically, ethically, combination of the two, by the flip of a coin, whatever. Our votes are not owned by a particular party, and it's profoundly anti-democratic to insist that everyone to the left of Richard Nixon vote for the Democratic nominee.)

Among all of this huffing and puffing comes this small book, perfect for puncturing the cobbled-together leftish veneer of some of the mainstream Democrats. It's also instructive in its examination of right-wing bogeymen like Karl Rove, Dick Cheney, Marc Racicot, and the "maverick" John McCain. *Dime's Worth of Difference* is for the rest of us, who aren't willing to hold our nose and vote for Kerry without knowing the gory details of what that smell really is, and those of us who aren't willing to "waste" our vote on a party whose leadership actively works against the issues of the Left. I'll concentrate on the critiques of the Democrats, since the negatives of the various neo-cons and Republicans covered here are common knowledge to most MRR readers.

After reading Alexander Cockburn's entertaining columns, I attended a talk he gave in Berkeley before the 1992 election about Bill Clinton's incredibly crappy environmental record in Arkansas, among other things. It was refreshing to hear the nasty truth behind the candidate's façade, even though I (and most of the audience) ended up voting for Clinton that year. We did so with a lot fuller knowledge of his foibles than most of the nation, and a lot of those foibles ended up becoming part of his legacy- including his dismantling of the social service net (welfare "reform"), his passage of NAFTA, and his deregulation of media companies in 1996's Telecommunications Act. Clinton makes some bonus appearances here, in an examination of how he's screwed over the African-American community, how he tried to

start the privatization of Social Security until a certain affair with a certain intern blew up, and how he took the Republican's welfare destruction plan and ran with it.

It's too easy to Clinton-bash, so the editors have also gathered fascinating pieces on Northern California politics (from newspaper editor Bruce Anderson), Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition, Paul Wellstone, Women and the Democratic Party, the prison-industrial complex under the Democrats and the Republicans, and more.

Not all of the pieces are completely negative, although the Paul Wellstone hit piece blows up minor offenses to his base along with one legitimately large offense- his support of the "Defense of Marriage Act" in the late 1990s. The author admits that Wellstone clearly supported the Act for political reasons, not ideological ones. Yet he assumes a naïve air about national politics, acting shocked- just shocked!- that this would happen to the great progressive icon. Sure, Wellstone made the wrong choice about gay marriage and was still able to keep strong gay/lesbian progressive support in spite of it, but it seems excessive to dwell on it. I smell sour grapes and disappointment that Wellstone was human and imperfect. As someone in the public eye, I know through personal experience that spectators are quick to criticize any sign of weakness or questioning of the party line, without taking into account the context of the situation. In this case, the author explains the context and still goes off the deep end.

This internecine left-feeding-on-the-left prose negates the power of some of these pieces, although the same level of attack prose makes many of the other essays extra-enjoyable. Some of this is my recognition that (especially in politics) nothing is black and white, and the refusal of some of these authors to never cut any slack to any of their subjects. I probably react the worst to the Wellstone piece because the guy's dead (which he wasn't when this was written) and because, compared to pretty much the rest of Congress, he was consistently on the side of the people and not sucking corporate cock. The same amount of vitriol directed at someone I despise, like Karl Rove, or someone I'm ambivalent about, like John McCain, is incredibly entertaining to me.

In the end, this book is valuable because it forces us to deal with a lot of inconvenient facts about our alleged allies and our sworn enemies in national politics. It traces the non-partisan nature of many of the corrupt backroom operatives and the legislative collusion of the two national parties- or at least of the leadership of the two national parties. Cockburn and St. Clair have assembled another great anthology of political-prose-as-assassination. Dig in!

—Jesse Luscious

The Emerging Police State
William Kunstler
Ocean Books
121 pages, paperback
$12.95

William Kunstler is one of those rare radicals who somehow managed to become a legend, in his case, even before his death nine years ago at the age of 76. Some said he was too publicity-seeking, some said he was even pompous at times, but Kunstler was, above all, a lawyer who craved taking on a big case in defense of clients who were up against incredible odds. His list of clients reads like a who's who list of famous post-World War II radicals—Martin Luther King, Jr., Angela Davis, the Chicago Seven, Daniel Berrigan and prisoners who participated in the 1971 Attica prison uprising. He also defended clients most lawyers would consider too despicable to represent, like Colin Ferguson, a man who killed six people on the Long Island Rail Road in 1993.

His best-known case was the Chicago Seven trial. The defendants—Jerry Rubin, Tom Hayden, Rennie Davis, David Dellinger, Abbie Hoffman, John Froines, and Lee Weiner—had been charged with conspiring to incite riots at the 1968 Democratic National Convention. Black Panther Bobby Seale was originally included, until the judge famously gave the order to shackle him, and separated his case from the group.

Throughout the trial, Kunstler never avoided an opportunity to make the justice system look ridiculous. His clients wore judicial robes to mock the judge, and even tried to hold a birthday party in the courtroom. When Abbie Hoffman received marijuana in the mail from a supporter, Kunstler brought the matter to the court's attention.

"I'm sure counsel can find a way to take care of this matter without further troubling this court," Judge Hoffman said.

"Your honor," replied Kunstler, "I will personally see that it is burned this evening."

The defendants were found not guilty of conspiracy, but five were convicted of crossing state lines with intent to riot. Judge Hoffman also cited Kunstler for contempt, after several heated and often mocking exchanges. Although Kunstler was sentenced to a four-year-thirteen-day prison term, it was later overturned.

A new book, *The Emerging Police State,* compiles over a dozen speeches and court statements Kunstler gave throughout his lengthy career, focusing on everything from flag burning to the murder of four students at Kent State. Several of the speeches are taken directly from Kunstler's FBI file, as the bureau often sent agents to his speaking engagements.

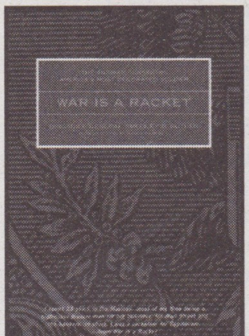
Kunstler is at his best when he makes historical connections. In an excerpt from his closing argument for the Chicago Seven Trial, Kunstler tells the judge, "You can crucify a Jesus, you can poison a Socrates, you can hang John Brown or Nathan Hale, you can kill a Che Guevara, you can jail a Eugene Debs or a Bobby Seale. You can assassinate John Kennedy or a Martin Luther King, but the problems remain...The hangman's rope never solved a single problem except that of one man."

In a speech in 1971 at Western Kentucky University, he addressed the injustice of the legal system, saying, "Every Jew that went to a gas chamber went with a neatly typed extermination decree of a German court." However, at other times, Kunstler's comparisons of the United States to Nazi Germany seem over-simplified, as though he could not think of another way to express the extent of his outrage at American politics.

In many ways, Kunstler was the Michael Moore of the legal world. (And to say this is not to overlook his considerable courtroom skill and legal knowledge.) A genius at stirring up outrage, shock and publicity, he functioned best in front of a jury or a journalist's camera. And, like Moore, his speeches tend to use the same images, even the same sentences, over and over, making this book both a quick read and a bit too repetitious at times. Those seeking more information on Kunstler should check out his autobiography, *My Life as a Radical Lawyer.*

At his funeral, the journalist Jimmy Breslin said, "Dying is no big deal; the least of us can manage that. The trick is how you live, and Mr. Bill Kunstler lived. He lived with a searing pace, a furious energy, an overwhelming love of right and dislike of wrong." It's enough to make you want to be a lawyer.

—Maddy



War is a Racket
Brigadier General Smedly D. Butler
Feral Hous
PO Box 39910
Los Angeles, CA 90039
84 pages • $9.95

Brigadier General Smedley Darlington Butler is not a very familiar name when it comes to military lore in America. Butler was a two-time winner of the Congressional Medal of Honor. As a solider he oversaw American campaigns in China, Nicaragua, Cuba and Haiti. After his retirement from military service he brought down a planned corporate coup that threatened to seize control of the White House. He supported World War I Bonus Marchers who rallied in DC looking for their promised "War Bonus." He treated all his men fairly and honestly and was respected for it. Most importantly, he realized that in his role as a military leader he was a "high-class muscle man for big business, for Wall Street and the bankers. In short a racketeer for Capitalism." This book was his effort to expose

everything that he knew about the inner workings of the American War Machine.

The first sentences of Butler's book, written in 1935 and mainly referring to World War I remain true today, "War is a racket. It is possibly the oldest, easily the most profitable, surely the most vicious." Butler then rips into war profiteers who never shouldered a rifle yet made millions in blood money. Throughout his writing Butler posits that the single focus of war is to make money for the few by trading in the blood of the many. To know that in 2004 these words accurately and eerily describe the majority of the men and women now in control of the United States of America is shameful and disgraceful.

In Chapter Two "Who Makes the Profits" Butler analyzes who made money during the Wars he was involved with. He analyzes how they made their money and how much they made. All one has to do is change some of the industries, corporate names, increase the profits exponentially and you will have a blueprint for the wars of today launched by the US. Again, this shows that when it comes to war, the technology may change through the years, but the end result is always the same, many die and a few make more money.

Interestingly, Butler points out that it was not always big business that made money from war; up until the Spanish American War soldiers also made a profit above and beyond their military salary. Soldiers were paid enlistment bonuses, and they were paid when enemies were captured. The government then discovered they could substitute medals and ribbons for dollars and did so. Thanks to that logic, borrowed from Napoleon, soldiers pay the bill of war with their lives, limbs, minds and souls and are rewarded with worthless tin and ribbon.

Butler offers simple solutions to end the racket of war. First, take the profit out of war. Pay everyone that works in the war industry the same wage that a solider would make in the trenches risking his life. This is a simple and effective plan. Pay the CEO of United States Steel (or Halliburton today) the same as the grunt in the trenches and see how many wars are launched. Another solution; vote on the war. However, the vote would be restricted to those who will be called upon to fight and serve, not those in Congress or the President. Butler's final suggestion, limit the military to homeland defense only; secure these shores, do not patrol the shores and lands of others that are not legitimately threatening us. In other words promote isolationism. As Butler states, "there are only two reasons why you should ever be asked to give your youngsters. One is defense of our homes. The other is the defense of our Bill of Rights and particularly the right to worship God as we see fit." There is no mention about sacrificing the young in search of phantom weapons on foreign shores or to payback on a threat to your Daddy.

Butler shows very clearly that isolationism is the best defense for our country and also the least profitable for big business. In his essay "Common Sense Neutrality," Butler details what it would take to attack the shores of the US with success. If anyone thinks that a prolonged ground attack of the US is feasible today they should read the list of items an attack of this type would require. Simply put, it ain't gonna happen.

If the current leadership of this country had read this book and taken Butler's suggestion of a Peace Amendment into account we may not have had to endure the attacks of 9/11. The focus on this Amendment, which could easily be adopted, is a true defense of our borders that not even a rat could sneak through.

The final section of the book is a collection of war atrocity photos from the classic book The *Horror of It* that any war supporter should be forced to view in the company of those that have lost a loved one for "democracies sake."

Make no mistake, Butler was not the Michael Moore of his time; Butler did not point out problems with a smarmy smile on his face while raking in millions of dollars. Butler saw problems with his country; he was critical of issues that affected the working class and he offered solutions to these problems. There is no cuteness in his words, they are hard, honest and thought provoking. And through it all he loved his country; however he had no love for those that ran it and manipulated the masses for their profit.

"This was the war to make the world safe for Democracy" was the cry the public heard in Butler's day, just as we hear today. Butler did not believe that statement and said, "no one told them that dollars and cents were the real reason" for war. Today, Butler would be called un-American due to his critical words. In reality he was the ultimate patriot, never forgetting that the US was to be run by the people, not by big business. Sadly, 70 years after Butler wrote these essays things remain the same.

This is a rare book that stands the test of time and could help us today. If we heed Butler's words and put his ideas in place perhaps we can avoid further useless war.

—Trent Reinsmith

For Here or To Go: Life in the Service Industry
Edited by Leah Ryan
195 pages • $15.95
Garret County Press
828 Royal St. #248
New Orleans, LA 70116
www.gcpress.com

For Here or To Go is an engaging collection of stories, fiction & nonfiction, about working in the service industry. I have to admit that the short story is my favorite medium of fiction, particularly those that display "gritty realism," & the editor's choices in *For Here or To Go* consistently satisfy that preference.

While this book is not overtly political, it's content certainly highlights issues of race class, & gender inherent in the work world. Most of us can certainly empathize with the characters in this anthology. There are the all to familiar degrading aspects of the typical shit job such as low pay, unappreciative bosses and customers, strenuous labor, and torturous schedules. You can recognize yourself & your gripes in many instances.

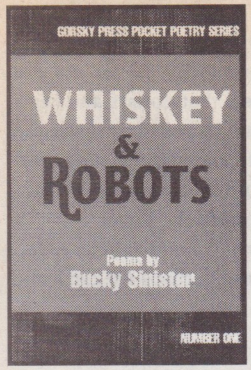
However, also represented in the collection are repeated examples of ways in which we find encouragement in our work. There's the camaradery between employees. In many of the stories, there are characters who share a sly, warm regard for each other, who would otherwise not necessarily have any connection if it weren't for their common plight.

Also, there is the surprise inherent in being appreciated, in the sympathy of a customer, in people behaving better than you expect them to. I especially related to the stories of food service jobs, having worked as either a waitress or a dishwasher through high school & college, & my brief stint after college as a dishwasher in a country / western bar (there are more than a few stories to be mined from that experience alone.)

Highlights of the collection include "A Year on the Floor: Journals" by Robert Gregory and "A Large Sparkling" by Moira Gentry. Both Stories display the tedium of restaurant work, and the familiarity that develops between coworkers. *Dish Diary* editor Leah Ryan's contribution is also one of my favorites, a familiar story of the teenage dishwashing gig that had me laughing out loud. "The Naming of Ghost Bitch" by John Mancuso is a real standout, a story of a transvestite plotting to exact revenge for the death of a his friend.

Ryan's *For Here or To Go* is an enjoyable read with some really good storytelling that had me sympathizing with the lows of the characters and chuckling at the more absurd moments that we've all experienced or witnessed.

—Tress



Whiskey & Robots
Poems by Bucky Sinister.
Gorsky Press Pocket Poetry Series
Gorsky Press:
PO Box 42024
Los Angeles, CA 90042
80 pages

"I, too, dislike it. Reading it, however, with a perfect contempt for it, one discovers in it, after all, a place for the genuine." Poet Marianne Moore wrote that 50 or so years ago on the topic of poetry, and its relevance has only grown. I keep the quote in mind when I read poetry, particularly poems this boozy & brash.

Spoken word poetry (you know, poetry slams, performance art, etc.) is a wholly different beast than traditional (academic, modernist, etc.) verse. All sides can agree on that, yes? The spoken stuff tends to be more slapstick, absurdist & prosaic, digestible on the first reading & not so out of place opening for punk bands.

I should admit my preference for less flashy poems. Particularly, I have an aversion to writing that romanticizes the hard drinkin' lifestyle in some self-effacing, defeatist, Tom Waits style. There's too much of that in real life, you know?

But you probably know which type of poetry (if any) you can stomach. The title of this one, Whiskey & Robots, lets you know immediately. Just as the pieces "Drowning on God's Urine" & "My Girlfriend is Way Cooler than Wayne Gretzky's Helmet" will polarize most readers. Maybe it's a bit unfair to have oral piece in a book-form without their smoky, barroom romance. But, here's the book & here we are.

Amidst all the whisky bottles replacing Bibles and repeated use of the words 'lonely' & 'angel', there are standout pieces. "My Date with Wonder Woman" & "The Other Universe of Bruce Wayne" utilize superheroes with surprising poignancy. Sinister's poems succeed when they break from stock images. Bland descriptions like "hard liquor" & "tragic women" mingle in the same poem with more haunting images of "fingers that have calluses / in the shapes of / Jack Daniel's bottles / & unfiltered Camel cigarettes." Because you can't just talk about the "darkness"—give me some evidence, some scenes of the story. Thankfully, Sinister does so about half the time. Not a bad ratio for poetry.

Fans of the Bukowski style (conversational, drunken, West Coast, male writing) will enjoy the book. The rest of us will point out that he misspelled Morrissey.

- Travis Fristoe.

The Black Car Leaving
Eddie Willson
90 pages
Self, Self Self Publishing
20 Rochdale Way Deptford
London SE8 4LY England
www.eddiewillson.freewebspace.com

Naysayers dismiss self-publishing as vanity press. Meaning the work isn't good enough for "real" or established book companies, and us poor saps have to pay for printing ourselves. And do the distro, etc. DIY in a nutshell. The problem with self-publishing is that there might not be a friendly editor around to help shape up the mechanics of the story with some constructive criticism. Or tell you that using a scratchy drawing of Munch's painting *The Scream* is a bad idea, even if it is referenced as a fanzine cover in the novel.

The Black Car Leaving has acceptable constituent parts: 1977 England, small town punks, drinkin', acid-freakout scenes & lame bosses. Suicides and hit & runs, too. The characters take turns narrating in the novel, a style Faulkner used well in As I Lay Dying. Here, though, it can make for a confusing start. Is the author, Willson, also one of the characters? We do live in an age of meta-fiction, but his parts break the flow of the tale. As do the typos and periodic lapses into italicized thoughts. I want to applaud Willson's effort here (writing a whole damn novel) & the subsequent courage to self-publish this beast in an uncaring and downright hostile world, though.

As I got acclimated to his style (and stopped worrying about solving the mystery therein), I could enjoy things like the regional slang: "knocked me for six", "grass you up", & "dog's share of the pie." Great, defeated passages crop up as well: "He sagged into a routine. He would sit down each morning to drunkenly undercooked fried eggs, whose yolks burst like blisters. Each evening after work he would sit in the parlour with the other lodgers, absorbing their defeat like it was a smell." The ending comes a bit too tidy, but you have a feeling that the next parts are going to be way easier for everyone. In the meantime, readers who want a mystery with a similarly pungent sense of location & authoritative music references (but don't mind popular fiction & its tropes) might go for George Pelecanos's D.C. novels.

—Travis Fristoe

MOVIES

BRING ME THE HEAD OF GENE SISKEL

CAROLYN KEDDY

CHANGING THE WORLD ONE PRANK AT A TIME

By the time you read this, the Presidential election will be over. Finally. It's three weeks away and I am so sick of both candidates and people talking about politics. It is all everyone wants to talk about right now. I told my mom I was going to quit the Keddy family if she votes for Bush. I can't tell if she is just messing with me or what. She is being very straight-faced about it. She voted for Ralph Nader last time. Could it be possible for her to have turned so abruptly around in four years?

If Bush is in office when you read this, immediately go see **The Yes Men** and start coming up your own ideas for identity correction. **The Yes Men** started out when a friend had the foresight to register www.gwbush.com in 1999. Mike Bonanno and Andy Bichlbaum, the pranksters behind the Yes Men, made a fake website for Bush using his official website as a basis. It did so well, they next move on to a WTO site www.gatt.org. Through this site the group is contacted as official spokesmen for the WTO. They answer questions, help people out and accept invitations to conferences.

Yes Men begins with the group heading off to a trade conference in Tampere, Finland. They will be presenting an executive leisure suit made of gold lamé. The suit includes the "Employee Visualization Appendage"; a giant, inflatable phallic appendage that protrudes from the crotch of the suit and contains an eye level monitor so the person wearing the suit can keep tabs on their third world sweatshop employees. The ridiculous theory behind this suit is that the executive will be able to maximize his time by being able to exercise while working.

Bonanno and Bichlbaum head to Paris to finalize their presentation with friends who help with the costume, computer animation and graphics. Then it is left to Bichlbaum as Hank Hardy Unruh to introduce the project to conference. He amazingly is able to do so without laughing. He argues that the Civil War was wrong and we should have left slavery to naturally work itself out. Now we have a system that is the equivalent of slavery, third world production. Then he reveals the suit. There are a few titters of laughter at first, but the audience basically accepts his idea. When asked after Unruh's presentation if there are any questions, no one has any.

It is pretty disturbing that the businessmen and businesswomen of the world just sit by and accept outrageous ideas like the executive leisure suit. The Yes Men manage to present many ideas that don't seem to be questioned such as ending traditions that don't apply to every culture such as the siesta in Spain and a plan to sell American votes over the internet. The only group that seems to get upset is some New York college students who are outraged that McDonald's would consider recycling used food (shit) to make food for starving countries.

Yes Men doesn't delve into that much background behind the WTO. You'll need to investigate that yourself. That is not what is important. I hope that it would plant some seeds and encourage others to join in the fun. (www.theyesmenmovie.com)

For some more fun try **A Dirty Shame** the latest film from John Waters. I am pretty shocked that this filmed opened in San Francisco to very little fanfare. It is a John Waters film, for Christ's sake. When did he become uncool? I saw it opening weekend playing at a small theater to an almost empty room. It seems very strange for a silly and fun Waters's film.

A Dirty Shame focuses on a neighborhood war between the repressed, anti-sex Neuters and the too sexually free Addicts. Uptight housewife and convenience store clerk Sylvia Stickles gets hit on the head and suddenly becomes interested in sex. She can't get enough. Messiah wannabe Ray Ray shows up. He is assembling a crew of twelve apostles to find a new kind of orgasm. Each has his/her own particular fetish. On the other side is a group of upstanding citizens led by Sylvia's mom who are outraged by the low morality of the neighborhood. They don't want gay men, loose women or exhibitionists on their block.

Of course, nothing is resolved. The addicts try to attend a sex anonymous meeting, but end up recruiting the group to their side. Everyone starts having sex, getting crazy and freaking out. Waters has a good time making fun of both sides. There is a lot of gratuitous nudity that earned the film a NC-17 rating. I am sure you could read something meaningful into **A Dirty Shame** like it being a metaphor for American society, but I'd rather not do that. (www.adirtyshamemovie.com)

Diarios De Motocicleta ("The Motorcycle Diaries") is the story of the young Ernesto "Che" Guevara de la Serna and Alberto Granado as they drive across South America on a motorcycle that is barely holding together. Guevara is about to graduate medical school and Granada is a biochemist. They beg for food, shelter and repair work. The goal is to be at the Colombian peninsula to celebrate Granado's thirtieth birthday then to do some volunteer work at a Brazilian leper colony. The people they meet on this trip influence them in many ways that will lead to their involvement with communism.

Diarios De Motocicleta tries to stay away from being too political. It is hard since it is about two people everyone now knows were revolutionaries. A few bits can't help but poke out such as when they visit the Inca capital of Machu Picchu. The voice over comments on how the Incas were able to make such a beautiful city and now they are living in poverty. The Spanish moved Peru's capital to Lima, which comparatively is an average, ugly, modern city. They meet people who have to do anything to survive such as work in the Colombian miners. They befriend lepers breaking the rules of the nuns who work in the colony. This trip brought Guevara and Granado out of their comfortable middle class environment and face to face with the problems of the world.

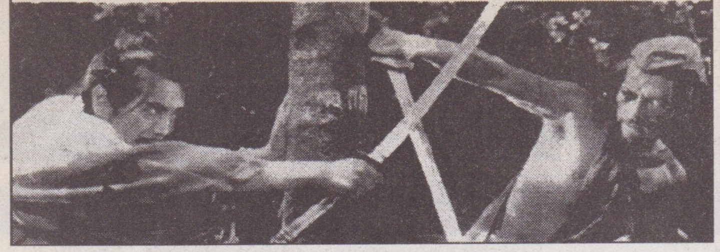
Diarios De Motocicleta is beautifully shot, subtle and inspiring. Whether you agree or not with what Guevara went on to do, you can understand where he is coming from. He really wanted to help the people of South America. (www.motorcyclediariesmovie.com)

Wire On The Box: 1979 is an amazing live performance by Wire recorded for the German television show Rockpalast. Half of the material is from the soon to be recorded *154* album. Wire delivers a fantastic performance. When an audience member yells for a song, he is met with a blunt, "we don't play requests". The show's host Alan Bangs interviews the band after the performance. Also included in the package is a CD version of the show for those days when you can't get to your DVD player. (www.pinkflag.com)

The 25th anniversary edition of the Clash's *London Calling* includes a DVD that has a great documentary about the band **The Last Testament: The Making Of London Calling.** Each band member gives his insight into the recording process, but it is the amazing black and white footage of the actual recording sessions that make this stand out. Producer Guy Stevens is crazy. He jumps around the studio screaming at the band. He tackles the engineer Bill Price. He drinks. He breaks things. He advises Joe Strummer to grab onto a sound petition while he sings. It is wild to watch. How could you work in that environment? Why aren't all producers this exciting? The DVD also included promotional videos for the album. (www.theclashonline.com)

I am always looking for film to review. If you made one, send a copy to me c/o MRR, PO Box 406760, San Francisco, CA 94146-0760. E-mail me at carolynmrr@juno.com if you have a film screening in San Francisco. I will go see it.

FINAL CUT BY STEVEN SPINALI



DOWN FOR THE NEURON COUNT

Most anyone who watched the Bush/Kerry debate will find this film's title more than a little ironic. In reality, even some conservatives reluctantly admit that George W's competencies derive more from relying on the neo-conservative brain-trust than his own. By the time you read this, the new documentary **Bush's Brain** will be regarded as either a cat-scan of governmental decision-making at its most rarefied levels, or a post-mortem on a failed presidency.

Based on the nervy tell-all by Jim Moore and Wayne Slater, **Bush's Brain** investigates the rather frightening notion that GOP pitbull Karl Rove may be the mastermind behind the President's key policies. Knowing Rove's past, there's reason for concern.

From early on, Karl Rove seemed to have had the winning combination of a superior intellect bound up with a need to win. An exceptionally successful high school debater, he'd demoralize his competition by bringing multiple file drawers full of evidence cards to competition. Most of the cards would be blank, but his command of the topic would carry the day.

His ambitions ran higher than dominating the forensics squad; next, he set his sights on national leadership of the Young Republicans—the best way for a greenhorn to enter the world of politics. By the account of one gray-haired academe—once his upperclassman and confidant—Rove undercut his friend's bid for election by planting a damning web of false rumors and innuendo. This was the first evidence of a standard Rove strategy: Anyone who was unfortunate enough to cross his path stood to have their political careers ruined.

Rove would never himself run for public office; instead, he preferred to lurk behind the scenes of his candidates. When the dirty tricks happened—plants, rumors, FBI investigations—opponents found themselves responding to a withering media attack that would dissolve only after the election had ended in an opponent's defeat.

The filmmakers tell one story that they classify as "classic Rove." In 1986, Democrat Mark White had whittled away the lead of Rove client Bill Clements. Momentum seemed to indicate that White might indeed win. Then, scant weeks before election day, Rove went on television and claimed that there'd been a listening device planted in the wall of Clements' office; there was, he said, no telling how many strategy meetings the White camp might have been privy to. Within days, Mark White's numbers plummet in a cloud of controversy. After the election, the evidence reveals that the pictured listening device had a battery life of only a few hours, and was stuck to Clements' office wall like a fat piece of molding with an antenna sticking out—hard not to notice. An FBI agent in cahoots with Rove later pocketed the bug. While an investigation cleared White's campaign, the damage was done and the election lost.

Filmmakers Michael Shoob and Joseph Mealey build a fascinating circumstantial case against Rove—a slippery character who never seems to get caught. Except once. During the elder Bush's presidential bid, Rove was fired for being caught doing "dirty tricks" in a style that would have put the Watergate bunch to shame. Of course, this setback wouldn't stop him from doing what he loved. He soon made good friends with a down-home co-owner of the Texas Rangers. With some polishing, his protoge soon defeated Ann Richards for Texas governor. (This time, Rove was said to pepper the campaign with suggestive attacks on Richards' support for homosexuals. She was defeated as easily as White had years before.)

Before that election, Rove had experts brief the stripling politician—a loser in hi only other election bid—to become a databank of Texas statistics and governmental procedures. The young Bush was essentially a "created" candidate, like a pop group that's created by marketers and sold as a real band.

According to a several pundits, Rove's seemingly amoral actions could be explained any number of ways. Is he the immature prankster of his high school days, or (as the directors posit) does he believe so strongly in his causes that any crime is okay?

The film's most surprising (and convincing) claim relates to the as-yet unresolved story of Valerie Plame—the undercover CIA agent whose identity was mysteriously leaked by a conservative reporter. It transpires that Plame's husband is Joseph Wilson, a career diplomat whose skeptical report on Saddam Hussein's supposed nuclear arsenal conflicted with the White House line (the now-infamous "Nigerian" connection). Rove was anxious to initiate aggressions in Iraq, but a diplomat stood in his way. The ensuing leak has that special Rove touch—except now it was personal.

In a mere 80 minutes, Shoob and Mealey sketch the outlines of a character who can be immensely smart and likeable, but also disturbingly vengeful. Of course he refused to be interviewed for the film. Rove doesn't offer much in the way of evidence to back up his claims.

I'm not prepared to accept the thesis that Rove is the sole architect of the Bush program. But as Chief Advisor the President, he has unique access to the most powerful man in government. **Bush's Brain** leaves you feeling more deeply troubled that it has any right to. (www.bushsbrain.com)

It seems sometimes that only extreme films can take my mind off current events, and the films of Miike Takashi definitely do the job. (The final scenes for his films are often worth the price admission in themselves. States-side audiences have seen anime-styled, blood-spattered Yakuza gunfights, bird-people sailing around remote peaks in China, excruciating dismemberments, 3D virtual chases, the Earth exploding, and legions of dancing/singing living dead. **Gozu** carries this trend to yet another extreme; let's just say it involves, among other things, a tight squeeze, a soup ladle and childbirth.

We've begun at the end, so let's start at the beginning. Yakuza-in-training Minami (Renji Ishibashi) drives his not-quite-sane boss Ozaki (Sho Aikawa, in his 100th film) around in a vintage '65 Mustang convertible. He's actually under orders from the main boss to bring Ozaki back to headquarters. It's harder than he'd thought.

Unfortunately, on the way, he accidentally slugs his boss dead. Which would probably have been okay, except that the body (which was sitting quietly in the back seat, sunglasses on) has suddenly vanished.

At this point, the film turns from Yakuza drama to a David Cronenberg-like descent into psychosexual purgatory. Minami enlists the help of "the Shiroyama crew," who are centered at a local dump. A guy with half his face painted white leads Minami through town, but nobody seems to remember the gangster from the day before.

This ghost town has its share of creepy characters, all of whom seem to have escaped from a David Lynch casting call. A wrinkled innkeeper offers to feed Minami her breast milk, and before long, milk is dripping from the ceiling into large pots. When Minami asks the innkeeper for help in finding Ozaki, the only thing she can think of is a consultation with the in-house spirit medium, whom she pummels with a bamboo whip. At night, a minotaur walks into Minami's room and gives him a tongue bath, and the next day, everybody but the Yakuza seems to have seen the enigmatic Ozaki.

Bush's Braindoesn't have the blood-curdling violence of Takashi's *Ichi the Killer*, nor the relentless perversity of *Visitor Q* or *Dead or Alive 1* (it was followed by two sequels). But thanks in no small part to Koji Endo's groaning musical score, **Gozu** has an air of foreboding.that's hard to shake off.

Before long, **Gozu** has slipped into a dark, nightmarish world that Kafka would have appreciated. When Ozaki does appear, he's now a beautiful young woman who baffles Minami with her detailed knowledge of their friendship. At night, virginal Minami peels back the girl's sheets to find that her private parts are actually, well, talking. It becomes clearer than ever that **Gozu** is something like a neo-Freudian ode to Yakuza sexual repression,

Which brings us to the ending. It really has to be seen to be believed, and I'll leave that treat for you. (http://www.toei-video.co.jp/data/gozu/index.html) Comments? Email me at anywhichway@myway.com.

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4FT FINGERS – "A Cause for Concern" CD

4FT FINGERS have mastered the BAD RELIGION-style sound with this highly-produced CD. They have serious lyrics on popular themes like "A Life We Choose to Live," "Unite or Fall" and "Stand My Ground." I have a feeling these guys are gonna be big time before too long. (HM)
(Go Kart, PO Box 20, Prince Street Station, New York, NY 10012, www.gokartrecords.com)

THE 5.6.7.8's – "I'm Blue / (I'm Sorry Mama) I'm a Wild One"

Japanese all-girl garage band that has become famous outside the garage scene for their performance in the movie *Kill Bill.* Side A is an Ike Turner cover from that movie. Side B is more rocking and crazy and more of what I like to see from the 5678's. (CK)
(Sweet Nothing, c/o Cargo UK, 17 Heathmans Rd., London, SW6 4TJ, UNITED KINGDOM, info@cargorecords.co.uk)

ABDUCTEE S.D. – "Won't Stand Down" CD

This angry female trio from Sweden delivers strong bare-bones punk rock with conviction. Great shout-out choruses on all these speedy melodic tunes. Well thought out lyrics sung in Swedish and English brush topics about capitalism, patriarchy, local politics, and making money on women through the creation of new complexes. A nice release. (SR)
(Communichaos Media, PO Box 825, 101 36 Stockholm, SWEDEN; www.communichaos.com)

ACTION – LP

Fuck the spiky hair "we don't care" attitude of the past. Apathy is boring as hell. ACTION cares, and they "won't stop screaming." Yes, this record is a little on the over-produced Punkcore side of things, but seeing right past that these guys have some solid songs with good hooks and memorable leads. They remind me of a mix of the VARUKERS, the UNSEEN, and maybe a bit of DEFIANCE; overall, they have a great straight-forward approach. Their lyrics deal with poverty, religion, war, and the wish to empower oneself and rise up against all the shit. I have to give these guys credit too, since this is the first Punkcore record I've ever seen that does not feature the bands awesome UK '82 hair on the front or back of the record—but don't worry you get that on the insert. Q) What's wrong with looking punk? A) Absolutely nothing if you really mean it. This record also features a good cover of XTRACT's "Blame it on the Youth." (WK)
(Punkcore, PO Box 916, Middle Island, NY 11953)

ACTION SWINGERS – "Enough Already–Live!" CD

I love the ACTION SWINGERS' *Complete London Toe Rag Sessions* LP that came out on Cheap Date in 1998, the same year these live recordings were made. Those recordings were so distorted and trashy that they emphasized the great snarling vocals of Ned Hayden. He's pissed and I like it. These live recordings are taken from the soundboard and as a result the vocals overpower everything else in the mix. He's still angry, but the music isn't accentuating it as much as I want it to. I am sure at the show it was nice and loud, I just wish these recordings would reflect that. I guess I should've been there. (CK)
(Reptilian, 403 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21231)

ADVERSARY WORKERS – "The Inner Workings of Change" CD

Kinda emo, kinda arty, kinda "now sound" as far as 2004 indie-rock-leanin' punk goes. I'll bet they got the troops movin' at the last USO show they played, but this CD itself lacks any stone cold killers, just lots of competence spread evenly with urgent vocals and occasional spidery guitar spooge. Not classic, no foul. One guy on the back panel insert looks like he's into Turkish psych, man. (RW)
(Collective, www.collectiverecords.com)

A LIGHT IN THE ATTIC – "When They Sleep" LP

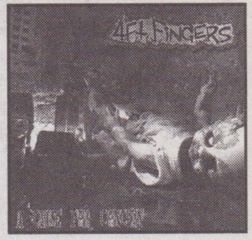
Devastating metalcore here from this Bay Area (I think) trio with former members of YAPHET KOTTO and SUICIDE NATION. MAJORITY RULE seems to be the most obvious reference point in terms of sound, especially in the eerie, quiet moments they intersperse amongst the thundering heaviness. A LIGHT IN THE ATTIC up the ante a bit on their cross-country brethren though by incorporating the occasional blast beat and double bass drumming. Overall, there are some pretty wicked riffs here and plenty of good dynamics and transitions to keep things interesting. (EL)
(Wild Zero, www.wild-zero.de)

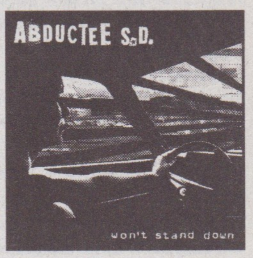
AMBULANCE – "The End of Our Time" LP

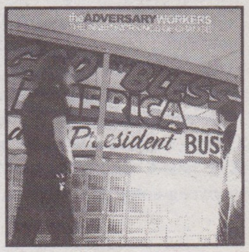
This LP has FROM ASHES RISE-core written all over it, from the foreboding tree painting on the cover, to the handwritten song titles on the back (eerily similar to the *Nightmares* LP…it seems that Arwen has a handwriting fan/copycat!), to the moody guitar arpeggios. Altogether, AMBULANCE isn't afraid to (ahem) wear their influence on their sleeves, as it were; the only band shirt displayed prominently on the insert is (duh) FROM ASHES RISE. It also bears mentioning that this band is from Umeä, Sweden and enlisted the members of SKITSYSTEM to provide back-up vocals on this recording. This LP isn't bad, but I can't help but worry that even bands from Sweden are mimicking this style. That is to say, I'll take NO SECURITY over AMBULANCE any day, but you might like this if you were into the TO WHAT END LP. (GN)
(Putrid Filth Conspiracy, Box 7092, 200 42 Malmö, SWEDEN)

APOCALYPSE WOW! –CD

This nuclear-power-trio delivers a payload of crunchy, noisy, fast punk that's not quite hardcore but definitely has that BLACK







FLAG-meets-surf-music beach punk edge. The production is rough and ready which is usually a good thing, but at times here the bass is buried and the chugga-chugga riffs can sound a tad too metal. Still, pretty good stuff. (AM)
(No Label, PO Box 1946, Venice, CA 90294. apocalypsewow@comcast.net)

ASS END OFFEND – "Character Assassins" LP
Harsh, rumbling punk from deep within the bowels of Montana, these songs are pretty raw and stripped down. Things fly by pretty quickly, but there are an ever-flowing mix of tempo changes that keep things interesting. Crunchy punk with a slight metallic edge that is dark and somber throughout. (RC)
(Wantage, PO Box 8681, Missoula, MT 59807)

BAMBIX – "What's in a Name" CD
Not why sure Daemon Records brought this gem back to life, but I'm real glad they did. Daemon is the label founded by Amy Ray of the INDIGO GIRLS. They tend to focus on female-oriented bands and singer/songwriters, but the closest they've come to punk to date is the BUTCHIES backing Amy Ray's solo efforts. BAMBIX are certainly dominated by the incredible vocals and axe work of Willia van Houdt. And they're Dutch. And they sing in English. While musically they are a far cry from the REPLACEMENTS, the timbre and catch of Willia's voice reminds me a lot of PAUL WESTERBERG. Musically, they excel in speedy, melodic punk with incredibly catchy rhythms and melodies. They mix it up like a less metallic JINGO DE LUNCH and LIFE.... BUT HOW TO LIVE IT. Actually, listening to this for the tenth time in the last couple of days, I do hear spots of the REPLACEMENTS and HUSKER DU in there. They are that good. And you should get this. For sure. (RK)
(Daemon, PO Box 1207, Decatur, GA 30031, www.daemonrecords.com)

STIV BATORS – "Disconnected" CD
The Stiv "solo" LP from 1980. Post-DEAD BOYS and pre-LORDS OF THE NEW CHURCH, this is a jangly psyche power pop record. I'm not sure if this is the first time on disc for this release. Maybe some import version was around. This also has four bonus tracks and some nice liner notes and photos. Not too tough of a find on vinyl, it is still good to see this classic release readily available again. (RL)
(Bomp!)

BOMBENALARM – "Destination: Fucked Up" EP
My friend Beni says this here punk rock outfit is the best band in his hometown of Bremen, Germany, and after hearing this thoroughly punishing four-song EP it's not hard to see why. Bulldozing, crusty hardcore with heavy riffs, caustic vocals, pick slides, Scandinavian-style dark melody, and pessimistic-but-socially-conscious lyrics sung in German all summate into one terrorizing weapon of mass destruction. OK, that was cheesy, but still...check this out. (EL)
(Unsociable, PO Box 105824, 28058, Bremen, GERMANY, hellache@unsociable.net)

BRIDGE TO SOLACE – "Of Bitterness And Hope" CD
Extremely well-produced (overproduced?) metallic, technical hardcore from Hungary of all places. If you didn't read it on the sleeve, you'd assume they were American and were on the bill for the next Hellfest (which, if there was any justice in the world, they would be). Heavy in places yet melodic where it counts, this is some of the best stuff of this genre that I've heard. The main downside to this CD is the between-song poetry. Even if the poetry was good, you'd get pretty tired of hearing it every time you listened to the album, and although I'm not really qualified to review poetry (or records, for that matter) I think it sucks. There's a lot of this type of stuff around these days, even on mainstream radio and MTV, but something about this puts it a notch above most of the crap out there. (AM)
(Let It Burn, Christoph Zehetleitner, Erzgiessereistrasse 51, 80335 Munich, GERMANY, www.letitburnrecords.com)

BROKEN TOYS – "Fistful of Caulk" CD
The BROKEN TOYS have been around for a considerable amount of time—that much I do know—and their style of speedy all-American hardcore dates 'em a bit to the wild-and-wooly late 80s when men were men and Bushes ruled the Oval Office. *Fistful of Caulk* contains 10 tracks (and a bunch of random home movies), recurring jokes about the final days of Elvis, scatological yuks, and lots of that fast and fatalistic Yankee-style p. rock that one has come to associate with the group. While not a lot of it reaches out and grabs me, their fans will be well pleased. (JH)
(Trashtone, 12 Miller St., Methuen, MA 01844)

BULLET TREATMENT – "What More Do You Want?" CDEP
Fast trashing hardcore—with feet planting firmly in punk. Ten tracks with clean yet surprisingly powerful production—and Matt's vocals are fucking totally great—just the right amount rawness while being totally tuneful. They've got this classic SoCal hardcore feel to them—think early ADOLESCENTS and CIRCLE JERKS—though with a slight feel of an earlier, more energetic GOOD RIDDANCE. (MT)
(Basement, PO Box 511, La Habra, CA 90633-0511)

BURIAL – "Touch and Go" EP
Well hot damn, evidently Germans can play Japanese style hardcore almost as well as the Japanese can. Really good, catchy "burning spirits" style hardcore that held my attention for three straight listens. This record shows that you can have melody in your record and still be brutal as hell. If you can't afford DEATHSIDE records you should pick this up, you probably won't really notice a difference. (NT)
(Autodafe, Schmidtstrase 54, 44793 Bochum, GERMANY)

THE CHEIFS – "Blues" EP
.....wow, this little record makes me feel *old*!!!! Those of you who were living and punking in Los Angeles in 1980 will remember this long lost classic......Rodney used to play the hell out of "Blues" every weekend on KROQ.......hell, I remember when he interviewed the band live on the air!!!!!! I also remember seeing the CHEIFS open up for BLACK FLAG and thinking that their live performance was dull.....but then again, how can you compete with the FLAG......especially at that time.............???!!!! As far as I know this three song seven-inch was the only thing the band ever put out and then they just sorta disappeared over night!!! These days an original copy goes for big bucks for those pieces of shit that can afford it!!!!!! Thankfully it has now been reissued and it looks and sounds pretty legitimate to me!!!! I gotta admit, "Blues" was a big fave with me and my friends when I was a kid, so much so that one of my teenage bands covered it around 1981 because it was so fucking wonderful and easy to play!!! Even now I would still put it in my Los Angeles punk top ten......no doubt about it.....so FUCK YOU!!!!!! (SW)

(Spontaneous Combustion, 3943 Cumnor Rd., Downers Grove, IL 60515, www.spontaneous.com)

CHUCK NORRIS – "Pick Up Your Skate" EP
Crazy, spazzed-out, thrashing punk from Canada that combines an interesting mix of sXe hardcore style riffs, and eye watering blast-beat speed. The lyrics focus on mix of everything from religion to sexist assholes. The snarling vocals are the key. (RC)
(PO Box 21530, 1424 Commercial Drive, Vancouver, BC V5L 5G2, CANADA, chucknorrishc@hotmail.com)

CREEPY CRAWLIE / WÖRM – split EP
For their side, France's CREEPY CRAWLIE turn out three totally raw, out of tune, moderately inept punk tunes that remind me a bit of Columbia's POLIKARPA Y SUS VICIOSAS—especially in the way Peppi sings/screams her vocals. On the flip we have WÖRM plowing through some quality melodic and totally lo-fi punk rock. Fuzz just all over everything; levels peaked out in the red—slight GERMS feel to the song structure though not totally. Just an eerie, tortured familiarity to the songs, that upon multiple listens really grows on you. Pretty great split in my humble opinion. (MT)
(Kämäset Levyt, www.punkinfinland.net/kamanen)

CRIMSON SPECTRE – "Strength of Ten Men" CD
I'm sure that over the years, a number of dorks have sat in their bedrooms and thought to themselves, "if only someone would meld the MISFITS/SAMHAIN horror-punk aesthetic onto twitchy screamo songs." Well, CRIMSON SPECTRE has done their part and filled that very niche, and are admittedly good at the style of music they play. It is now up to you, the discerning punker, to decide whether or not you need that particular niche filled in your record collection. *My* answer is no, though yours—especially if you are fond of Magic Bullet's previous releases—might be different. (GN)
(Magic Bullet, 17 Argyle Hills Rd, Fredericksburg VA, 22405)

CRIMSON SWEET – "Boulevard" EP
The CRIMSON SWEET epitomizes a tendency I used to notice among bands: I like the fast tunes ("Waste You, Taste You") and am left unmoved by the slower material ("Boulevard," "Blood Transfusion"). They're a raspy, high-grain rock trio that tamper with biker metal, blues, CHEAP TRICK-y pop and 70s punk. You pick up what I'm layin' down, yeah? Despite the patchwork of styles, the end result works well—the slower tunes are merely a touch more *stadium rock* than my tastebuds can bear. I'm thinking that three tracks might not be enough to properly judge the CRIMSON SWEET. (JH)
(Shake It, 4516 Hamilton Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45223, www.shakeitrecords.com)

THE CROOKS – "City of Rats" EP
For a few seconds I was worried that the best thing about this record was going to be the cheesy pic sleeve, which features some naked broads in a jail cell having a little chitchat. I thought it was going to be too metal-edged for me, but thankfully the metal influence quickly became secondary to early 80s-style So-Cal hardcore. With song titles like "12 Oz. Curls" and "Stalker Bitch," it's no surprise that the lyrical content could be a little more interesting, and the metal-edge doesn't go entirely away. Still, overall I like it. One last thing: small records should have big holes and play at 45rpm. (KK)
(NoMa Beach, PO Box 735, Sonoma, CA, 95476, www.nomabeach.com)

CROSSING CHAOS – "At the End" LP
Raw Swedish punk attack! 14 songs of hard-charging tunes that take their cues from many of the

classic Swedish punk bands. Gruff vocal delivery spewing angry political lyrics, plus ANTI-CIMEX and ASOCIAL covers to boot. Solid release! (RC)
(Putrid Filth Conspiracy, Box 7092, 200 42 Malmö, SWEDEN; putridfilth.com)

THE DEAD HATE THE LIVING – "Shock and Awe" CD
Eccentric metallic hardcore that plays up a variety of tempos and styles. Musically I thought they were decent, but could use some fine-tuning and a little more gas in oven. The problem was, I could not get into any of the vocals. Both the gruff growling ones and the spoken high-pitched ones were bad and distracting to me. Too bad. (RC)
(Hyperrealist, PO Box 9313, Savannah, GA 31412, www.hyperrealist.com)

THE DEAD KINGS – "I Just Can't Deicide / Feeding Frenzy"
These guys are a step away from being the house band at the Sizzler back in Charlotte, even if they do have thrashing guitars, heavy metal lyrical references and songs about Glen Benton from DEICIDE. Sorry, there's nothing to hear here. (EL)
(Casual, eugenio.zona@email.it)

DEAD STOP – "Down With You" LP
Wow, this is really fucking good. Rough-as-fuck hardcore punk that takes its cues from POISON IDEA, NEGATIVE APPROACH and perhaps a little SLAPSHOT. Burly sounding songs with angry lyrics about being fed up with everything. They manage not to sound like a rip off band, and even manage to sneak in a couple brutal breakdowns without throwing the record off. I don't really know what to say beyond that, it is just a really fucking good record. Did I mention it's fucking good? *Fuck.* (NT)
(Deranged)

DEAD LIKE DALLAS – "A Story as Old as Time" EP
Uh…twitchy, noodley, epileptic fit, seizure-core with emotive singy breakdowns. Sounds a bit like they would fit in well on a gig with HOT CROSS or some other Level Plane band and I bet you one million space bux I would heckle the fuck out of them when they got to the quiet part. Maybe they'd get lucky and I'd throw a trash can at them too! Yawn fest—just like the bands from a decade ago they are emulating. (MT)
(Square Of Opposition, 2935 Fairview St., Bethleham, PA 18020)

DEATHCYCLE – "Waste" EP
This is the second band put out by 17CM Records that has both an hourglass on the cover as well as the word "death" in the band title. Weird coincidence, or is Andy a little too focused on the afterlife? That aside, when I first played this record I immediately thought of a more pissed, much darker version of KILL YOUR IDOLS. Turns out that DEATHCYCLE has Gary from KYI on guitar (not too shabby for not looking at the lyric sheet). Four intense hardcore songs with a drawing of a grim reaper draped in an American flag on the back cover. But don't fear the reaper, because this record rips. (CC)
(17CM, PO Box 563, Lakehurst, NJ 08733, www.17cmrecords.com)

DEEP EYNDE – "Shadowland" CD
Here's some LA punk mixing the darker sounds of bands like the DAMNED and MISFITS with a shot of Southern California skater punk. Songs consist of skulls, space invaders, death, and of course Halloween. The first few tracks could grow on me but they loose me with some weak Goth club tunes towards the end. This could be some fun for you Spooky Kookers out there that don't take punk rock to severe seriousness. (SR)
(Disaster, PO Box 7112, Burbank, CA 91510; www.disasterrecords.com)

DEROZER – "Di Nuovo In Marcia" CD
Melodic punk rock with a tougher edge from Italy. When a couple songs slow down the pace, melodic pop punk influences of bands like SCREECHING WEASEL, shine through. Songs, mainly about in Italian, are enthusiastically sung with straightforward male vocals. Lyrics vary from environmental issues and war, to everyday struggles such as anger, friendship, and life in general. (SR)
(Derotten Records)

DISORDER – "We're Still Here" LP
Super loud and distorted, this old band is back with its own brand of drunk punk. This drunken mayhem is as obnoxious and noisy as it gets, complete with burping, gargling, and vomiting. There are a couple of really out there electronic spacey underwater instrumentals, which are really fucking weird. This chaos gets pretty annoying after a while, but isn't that what made them popular? (SR)
(Coutneract, c/o Racanelli Bruno, 1 Boulevard de Larraine, Quartier la Pointe Rouge, 13008 Marseille, FRANCE; counteract@free.fr)

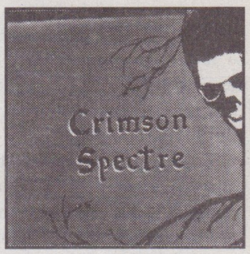
DISPREZZO – "Nel Mio Mondo Il Sole Non Sorge Mai" CD
Charging like a bull with his nuts strapped in a knot comes this raging Italian metallic crust band. Not to have their influences confused, DISPREZZO proudly swear their allegiance with the words "Addicted to Sweden" displayed on the back cover; it's not hard to hear why. This is sheer studded-jacket-sporting crust that would make WOLFBRIGADE proud with more energy and propulsive riffing than most. I of course love the super fucking metal guitars, but punks and metalheads alike should appreciate the breakneck pace, furious vocals and politically-charged Italian lyrics. Fukkin' brootal. (EL)
(Agipunk, www.agipunk.com)

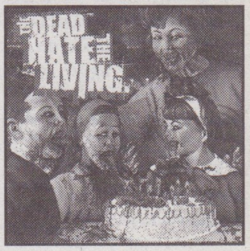
D.O.A. – "Live Free or Die" CD
This is a good D.O.A. record! Short punk songs filled with politics. So what if they sound like the old songs at times. That's what we want! Less rock guitar than some of their more recent releases, a bit of punk ska, and Shithead still being Shithead. 20 songs to boot. I only wish they would add a second guitar player like in their hey day for that sonic blast. One of the best punk bands of all time for sure. (RL)
(Sudden Death, www.suddendeath.com)

DRUNKEN VENGEANCE BASTARD – "Bullshit in USA" EP
This is one of those discs I would pass over in the distro box assuming it to be faceless hardcore…but how wrong I would be. This is a real treat—impassioned, driving punk rock from France. Taking the gravel throated vocals and guitar stylings of LEATHERFACE, but adding the hardcore punk of BORN DEAD ICONS or INEPSY. Smart political lyrics add up to a total fucking ripper. Oui Oui. (TB)
(Kick Rock, 4 Rue Camille Desmoulins, 42000 Saint Etienne, FRANCE)

ERASE ERRATA / NUMBERS – split EP
Two unconventional San Francisco groups pool their loose change and produce a revolving *object d'art.* Local favorites ERASE ERRATA produce a kind of controlled din that requires some initial exposure to appreciate. "Retreat, the Most Familiar, Extensive, I Bet!" and "Thief Despise the Criminal" are tense, busy stuff with a lotta trebly energy and nerves-on-edge buzz. Neat trick. The NUMBERS, by comparison, are deliberate, methodical, and driven inexorably toward some unknown destination. Synthesizers driven into overdrive. "Goin' Insane" and "Palo Alto" are stated more carefully than the tunes on their *Numbers Life* LP from a few years back: their synth-powered electro-pop still grabs me by the ethics and twists. Right on both counts. (JH)
(Troubleman Unlimited, 16 Willow St., Bayonne, NJ 07002, www.troublemanunlimited.com)

EXPLODER – "Bye Bye" CD
EXPLODER kind of sounds like a watered down SMALL BROWN BIKE or like the BROADWAYS in their milder moments. They show signs of having heard HUSKER DU, as well. They are very melodic and border on annoying, but they're not quite there yet. I think I like their unique clean guitar sounds and the fact that this is a really weirdly produced CD. Lyrically it's sentimental bullshit, but I think if these guys embrace the weirdness and shy away from typical, they could be a decent band. (WR)
(Moodswing, 3172 East Ponce De Leon Ave., Atlanta, GA 30079,





www.moodswingrecords.com)

FAT DAY – "Unf! Unf!" LP

Is FAT DAY a band or a joke? Is Load a label or a garbage disposal? This yelping speeder of an album leads me to believe that the answer to both questions lies somewhere in the middle. In case you didn't know, FAT DAY is the infamous band that pulled of that hoax *Killed By Death* compilation, and they continue their practi-musical joke here. *Unf! Unf!* features the short, grinding spasms that one would expect from any Load release, but the random, amateurish keyboard/synth instrumentals are what really throw you for a loop. It's funny that these tame instrumentals come of as the strangest part of this album. Even with all the quirky junk on here, it ultimately fails to grab me. That said, fellow mind-fuck aficionados might get a kick out of it. Possibly two. (MC)

(Load, www.loadrecords.com)

FIGHTING CHANCE – "Sacrifice and Struggle" LP

Second blistering hardcore full-length from this Baltimore powerhouse. The back up the raging twin axe thrash and chug with some suitably ferocious, intelligent anti-fascist lyrics. Nice to have some HC with a brain, as well as a heart (and pointy finger). Not to mention some royal guitar solos. Insurgence is a great Canadian label dedicated to putting out lefty, anti-fascist skinhead and hardcore bands. And they do it well. (RK)

(Insurgence, 2 Bloor St., W. Suite 100-184, Toronto, Ontario M4W 3E2, CANADA, www.insurgence.net)

FIGHTING CHANCE – "Party Lies" EP

It doesn't take too many lyrics to cipher out what the FIGHTING CHANCE are railing about! On side "A", these Baltimore, Maryland, USA leftist street punks. The title song "Party Lies" has some scathing criticism for the government. Read these lyrics: "On election day, vote for Scumbag A or Scumbag B / Neither could give a damn about the working class…/ Two parties for the rich and non for the poor" Fuck yes! FIGHTING CHANCE power through two more top quality street punk/Oi! numbers "Blamed" and "The System". FIGHTING CHANCE has a full length LP available on Insurgence Records called *Sacrifice & Struggle*, which is equally stimulating. FIGHTING CHANCE are a welcome addition to the Insurgence skinhead and punk contingent. Get your FIGHTING CHANCE product as soon as possible! (BR)

(Insurgence, 2 Bloor St. W, Suite 100-184, Toronto, Ontario, M4W 3E2, Canada; www.insurgence.net)

FINAL FOUR – CD

A Canadian street band that belts it out in a DROPKICK MURPHYS and HUDSON FALCONS way. Voicing a displeasure for the way things are, I sense the working class attitude thing. Nothing new but very good at the street/oi thing. (RL)

(Insurgence, 2 Bloor St. W Suite 100-184, Toronto, Ontario, CANADA, www.finalfourpunk.com)

FKS – "All Empires Fall" CD

FKS (that's (suppressed dry heaves) FORK KNIFE SPOON) is a metal/hardcore hybrid from Illinois, leaning on the heavier side of things. I thought of a weaker version of the mighty ALL IS SUFFERING from Maryland, with their combination of darker, melodic elements of both styles, like say LUDICRA meets TRAGEDY. Despite a few decent riffs, the production's not the best, the playing is not the tightest, and occasionally they get too close to this whole BLACK DAHLIA MURDER / ATREYU crap (minus the vocals thankfully) that's all over MTV these days. (EL)

(First Blood Family)

THE FLAP JACKS – "Move to Mars" CD

Recorded in 2001, these recordings are finally seeing the light of day, but this could've been released twenty years ago. The FLAP JACKS play rock and roll and traditional rockabilly with plenty of backbeat, twang and spunk. Good stuff. (HM)

(Last Chance, PO Box 42396, Portland OR, 97242)

FLASHLIGHT ARCADE – "The Art of Blacking Out" CD

An emo-ish poppy punk band with lots of tempo changes. Reminds of SAMIAM, HOT WATER MUSIC, and a dash of JIMMY EAT WORLD. A good groove when they bring it down for the build. Decent in this crowded genre. (RL)

(On The Rise, PO Box 2471, Westfield, NJ 07091, www.flashlightarcade.com)

FORWARD – "Burn Down the Corrupted Justice" LP

If you—like me—have not been crazy about the last couple of releases by Japanese powerhouses FORWARD, don't write them off just yet. After spinning this platter a handful of times, it has become evident that this is FORWARD's best LP since their first full-length *While You Alive*. All of the markers of traditional Japanese hardcore are present: the burly vocals, the thick and masterful guitar riffs, and the groovy but still hard-chargin' rhythm section. Overall, this LP is a bit harder-charged than their last couple of releases; I was beginning to get worried that FORWARD had lost their hardcore edge, but one listen of "Shove In" proved otherwise. For all you nerds keeping score, this record also sees the return of Souichi (also of INSANE YOUTH) on guitar. After a fun US tour, these greats of Japanese hardcore prove to us vinyl aficionados (the CD version of this came out a while back on HG:Fact records) that they still have that special something that it takes to make great hardcore records. A winner! (GN)

(Partners in Crime, PO Box 11787, Portland OR, 97211)

THE FOUR SLICKS – "Betty Lou" EP

JON VON and Co. put their cat clothes on for some rockabilly-inspired punk. As the enclosure goes to pains to point out, "mais attention, ce n'est pas du psychobilly," which is good for me because I can't tell the difference between good and bad psychobilly. This, on the other hand, is good. Fonzie punk lives, OK? (DD)

(Born Bad, 17 Rue Keller, 75011 Paris, FRANCE, www.fourslicks.com)

FRAMTID – "Under the Ashes" CD

Sadly, this is not a new release by FRAMTID, but rather a CD collection of their first two vinyl records (the *8-Ttrack* EP and the *Under the Ashes* 12") both originally released by Japan's Crust War records. Friends and well-wishers alike have heard me opine about the unmatched greatness of this band, and now it's your turn, my dear reader. FRAMTID is nothing short of a true powerhouse; they stand heads and shoulders above nearly all of their hardcore brethren, Japanese or otherwise. They are planted firmly in the mid-80s Swedish hardcore tradition (as their patches and t-shirts attest), but you don't necessarily need to have heard SVART PARAD, S.O.D., or BOMBANFALL to understand what's going on here—though listening to those bands certainly couldn't hurt! Take just one listen to "Consuming Shit and Mind Pollution" or the mid-tempo rager and my personal favorite, "Life's Hard," and you will be silly for FRAMTID too. For those of you who missed out on the vinyl releases, getting this self-released CD is a good alternative to paying ever-skyrocketing eBay prices or to waiting for the trend to cool down and picking up the records then. Already classic, and absolutely essential. (GN)

(1-28-3A, Shikitsu-Nishi 2, Naniwa-Ku, Osaka-City, 556-0015, JAPAN)

FUN – "Szklarska Poreba" CD

JESUS LIZARD and NOMEANSNO—if you like them, you will dig this. I can't make it any plainer than that. Groove, rant, spiraling guitar, mean vox... the whole works. (RW)

(If Society, www.ifsociety.com)

GREENLIGHT THE BOMBERS – "American Executive" CD

Tautly muscular indie-rock that at times reminds me of JESUS LIZARD, NIRVANA, and other stuff that was big in the days of flying the flannel. Lest you get the wrong idea about the NIRVANA reference, I realize that with their mainstreaming and hugeness there were countless shitty imitators a la PUDDLE OF MUDD etc, but GREENLIGHT THE BOMBERS more in line with what NIRVANA were actually trying to do than any mere imitators. Not that they even sound like them that much. Damn, I wish I hadn't mentioned them now. Okay, um, BASTRO, BITCH MAGNET, SQUIRREL BAIT. I can hear that in there too. Alright? Regardless, it's good stuff that should be snapped up immediately. (AM)

(Pencil Neck, www.greenlightthebombers.com)

THE GRIEFS – "Whenever You're Around / Give In"

"Modern" garage rock from Ohio. They strike me as a psych-pop MOONEY SUZUKI. Can you just picture the sour look on my face? These tunes are exactly the sort of limp bar-rockers that the glossy fashion rags claim as saviors. Don't waste your time. (MC)

(Spoonful, www.spoonfulrecords.com)

GÜNNA VAHM/FIGHT AMPUTATION – split EP

GÜNNA VAHM has something going on. I'm not really sure where they're coming from but they remind me of a less solid HELMET or maybe JESUS LIZARD with some SLINT-y instrumental parts and sometimes really faint vocals thrown in. Recorded kind of oddly, with the guitars really loud and drums pretty soft. Fucking rocks at times, then lets up, but not in a predictable way. Cool. FIGHT AMPUTATION is heavier and more straightforward, sounding something like HIS HERO IS GONE or MAJORITY RULE. They have some good moments, but for the most part they lack originality. (WR)

(Reptilian, 403 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21231, www.reptilianrecords.com)

HOOFTPIJN – "Voorby De T" CD

Dutch band. Great Dutch name, and album title—I think it means time for tea, or some such. They conveniently sing in English for all us non-Dutch speakers, but don't print the lyrics. Music is standard punker fare. They name-check the DICKIES and DEAD KENNEDYS in their liner notes (again, conveniently in English), but don't really sound much like 'em. Other than they can play, and its well produced, and they are trying—I suspect—be a little wacky, and quirky. More like a lackluster SCREECHING WEASEL. Couple of tracks have a ska-ish tinge. All of 'em leave me rather indifferent. I do love the sound of their name though—even though I'm sure I'm pronouncing it wrong to myself. (RK)

(www.HooFTPijN.nl)

HORROR – "First Blood Part II" 10"

Second installment from England's Northern pow-

erhouse, and they pick up pretty much where they left off. Super aggressive, no bullshit hardcore in the vein of their old incarnation VOORHEES or maybe early TEAR IT UP. Andy Bryant's storytelling lyrics are what set this band apart from the legions of others doing this, that and the fact that they peel paint at 100 yards. Blistering. (TB)
(Coalition, Newtonstraat 212, 2562 Kw Den Haag, THE NETHERLANDS)

HOT SNAKES – "Audit In Progress" LP
The lynchpins of both DRIVE LIKE JEHU and PITCHFORK, Jon Reis and Rick Froberg, are now onto their third album in their HOT SNAKES incarnation, and true to form, it's a scorcher. At first listen, it doesn't seem like there's much to distinguish this from either of the two earlier records, but with repeated listens Audit In Progress starts to stand out. While the first one definitely had the air of a studio project and the second found them testing the waters as an actual band, this record has them firing on all cylinders. All the original elements are there—crushing angular guitars, pure propulsive drums, searing vocals—but they've managed to hone the HOT SNAKES sound into a precision instrument. The also dabble a little in pure pop on the last track, and it works like a charm. A recent live show in SF was transcendent too. Faultless. (AM)
(Swami, PO Box 620428, San Diego, CA 92162, www.swamirecords.com)

HOUBA / LENIWIEC – "Crazy Bros" split CD
If I understand this split CD correctly, HOUBA are Polish and LENIWIEC are Czech. They take turns covering each other's songs on this disc, singing each other's songs in their respective native tongues. Pretty impressive, I guess, when you think about it. LENIWIEC have an accordion, and HOUBA a horn section, which they both apply admirably to their speedy, melodic punk. Imagine the MAD CADDIES and VOODOO GLOW SKULLS covering each other songs, in Eastern European tongues, and you'll have a fairly good idea of what this has to offer. The lyrics are translated into English (as well as being printed in their respective lingoes), but, I suspect, don't translate too well into the imperialist language. Nevertheless, a pretty fine international collaboration. Both bands can certainly play (and, apparently, are comfortable yodelling away in foreign tongues). As further proof of international co-operation, it would appear to be a split release between a—surprise surprise—Polish and Czech label.
(RK)
(Pasazer, www.pasazer.pl)

IGNITIONS – "Line on Free" CD
Mid-paced sorta generic Japanese hardcore—think a less exciting, less electrifying DSB. While they start with the same ingredients (a smidge VARUKERS, a smidge CHAOS UK, a smidge ABRASIVE WHEELS), they somehow fuck it up when comes to put it all together—songs too long, hooks aren't right and the fretboard masturbation is just to prevalent. (MT)
(MCR, 157 Kamiagu Maizuru, Kyoto 624-0913, JAPAN, www.dance.ne.jp/~mcr)

ILLDÅD – "Rakapitalism" LP
Heavy as hell Swedish hardcore certainly describes this record. ILLDÅD sounds every bit as tired and fed up with humanity as any record you own by VICTIMS or KRIGSHOT, and very well could be compared to either of those bands. This record has awesome production, good artwork, and is an all around good record. They also feature former members of M-PATI.
(Putrid Filth Conspiracy, Box 7092, 20042 Malmö, SWEDEN, www.putridfilth.com)

IMPERIAL LEATHER – "Saving Seats" EP
Here we have another EP of catchy and melodic punk rock from these Swedes, who have had a number of other vinyl releases over the past few years. The vocal style and pop sensibilities bring to mind country-mates BURNING KITCHEN. The more aggressive moments and anthemic vocal melodies also recall CALL THE POLICE, though these songs aren't quite as good, and lean more towards pop-punk than UK82. A solid effort overall; fans of the band will not be disappointed. (GN)
(Communichaos Media, Box 825, 101 36 Stockholm, SWEDEN)

INTERNAL AFFAIRS/LAST NERVE – split EP
Los Angeles. Australia. Hardcore. A great match up since both bands adhere to a fast verse/fast chorus/huge breakdown formula. I am partial to the INTERNAL AFFAIRS side because they play much faster than their split-mates, and Corey's vocals are a lot more intense. As with each INTERNAL AFFAIRS' recording, Corey's vocals have changed a little and the breakdowns just get bigger. As far as the vocals are concerned, these three songs lean towards the more raspy maniacal side. The LAST NERVE material on here is good. Up until their breakdowns, they remind me a lot of the newer Boston hardcore bands. But like I said in my last review, the vocals just aren't intense enough for their TERROR-like breakdowns. (CC)
(Resist, PO Box 372, Newtown NSW, 2042 AUSTRALIA)

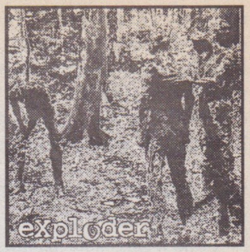
JABBERS – "American Standard" CD
This is a fucking piece of shit album from these old bastards whose last release was twenty years ago—It should have stayed that way. These fucks degrade women to the extreme on this album that I will soon be whipping my ass with. Lyrics about "hand jobs," "pussy purrin'," "picking up skank," and "titty bars." Lines like "You're a cute little bitch with a short black dress," "You're a cock magnet baby," "I want a cunt sandwich now," "Take me to my room and make me shoot my spunk…wanna put it inside of you" and "Some taste like tuna…some like honey," should outrage the punk community. What woman would ever want to touch one of these ugly old pricks anyways? The lyrics aren't "shocking" they're just stupid. Please don't support these assholes. (SR)
(Steel Cage)

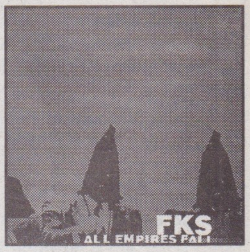
JE NE SAIS QUOI – "We Make Beginnings" CD
A little birdie told me that Coalition Records, whose previous releases "fall outside my area of expertise" (as they say) is shifting in my direction. This is a straight-up indie rock record, with 10-years-removed riot grrl vocals fighting for air space with a male counterpart, the sound a sparse organ-scented rock beat. Reminds me of some of the more rockin' releases on Slaampt; RED MONKEY perhaps? "Station to Station" is a total winner of a track; they should peel that one off onto a 45 for repeat play as it would make many, many NUMBERS fans happy. More please. (RW)
(Coalition, www.coalition-records.com)

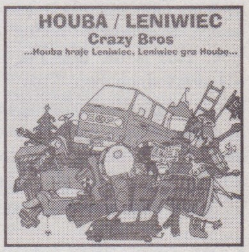
THE JE NE SAIS QUOIS – "Secret Language" CDEP
Here we have a Swedish group with a French name, with distinctly English-sounding post-punk pop. Neither as obvious about their inspiration as THE RAPTURE and their ilk nor as catchy as THE FUTUREHEADS, THE JE NE SAIS QUOIS still manage to carve out their own niche in the ever-more-crowed New Wave of the New Wave of the New Wave. You'll pick up on WIRE here, DEVO there, and modern indie rock like HOT SNAKES here and there. The first song and the fourth are my favorites, for the jittery guitar. Track five is an unnecessary PJ HARVEY cover. Pick this up. (AM)
(Coalition, Newtonstraat 212, 2562 KW, Den Haag, THE NETHERLANDS, www.coalitionrecords.com)

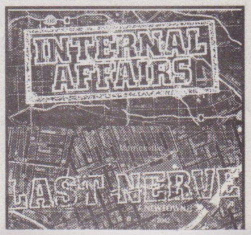
KAMIKAZE – "Seppuku" EP
Unrelenting New Jersey hardcore thrash—eight tracks in total, seven of which tear past you at a lightning fast clip, while the final cut slows down to a post-Damaged-era BLACK FLAG-style dirge. Pretty interesting guitar work and really good vocal stylings keep this from just being filed away in the generic paddle thrash category. If you got into their 12" from last summer, I think you'll like this even more. (MT)
(Soulrebel, www.kamikazehardcore.com)

KELLY 8 – "The Technique of Pushing Someone Forward" CD
Swedish band, Brit label, great female singer (when she sings—all too rare—typically she wails and bellows). Off-kilter screamo. Lots of tempo changes, lots of dynamics. Fans of the









SUBMISSION HOLD/the EX end of the punker spectrum will go apeshit over this, I'm sure. No one else will care, I suspect. Introspective lyrics in English, which despite the booklet, are a bit lost on me. Oh well. (RK)
(Bombed Our, PO box 17, Leeds, LS8 1UP, UNITED KINGDOM. www.bombedout.com)

THE KILLER – "Better Judged By Twelve than Carried By Six" CD
I find it laughable that this Chicago band claims to have "succeeded in creating a sound they can call their own" on their website. This is generic, tough-guy thug-core in the vein of INTEGRITY, HATEBREED, and ALL OUT WAR with mediocre riffs, horrendous vocals and ridiculous lyrics about the usual topics of revenge, pride and any number of other excuses to start a fight. Next. (EL)
(Organized Crime, PO Box 213, Brookfield, IL 60513)

KNIFETHRUHEAD – "Master-Piece" EP
I can't believe I'm bothering to comment on this. This is totally moronic joke rock that's got growling vocals and aggravating saxophone on every song. Every song has something to do with dicks, and the B-side is just a GEORGE MICHAEL cover whom they "expose" as being gay in their insert. I hope this band has 500 friends to give these all to. (EL)
(Cock Energy, PO Box 5700, Sacramento, CA 95817)

THE KNOCKOUT PILLS – "1 + 1 = Ate" LP
Yeah, I've heard these cats before and this shit is right up my alley. Imagine a poppier version of the DEAD BOYS or the USERS. Or imagine some lame power pop band and then make 'em real fucking tough. Either way, you come up with the KNOCKOUT PILLS. This is equal parts power pop, punk rock, and 70s AOR, and it will not be stopped. From start to finish, this thing just doesn't let up. And no, I'm not sleeping with one of the band members. (KK)
(Estrus, PO Box 2125, Bellingham, WA, 98227, www.estrus.com)

KUNG FU USA – "RRRML" CD
KUNG FU USA will not be classified. This San Francisco trio is part of the Star Cleaners inbred band community including 50 MILLION, STATIC FACTION, SHELLSHAG among others. KUNG FU USA experiments with indie, pop, acoustic punk, and drugs. Some songs sound like SMASHING PUMPKINS, some like the PIXIES, and others like 50 MILLION. About half the songs are slow, sweet and twisted. The CD title says it all—RRRML! (HM)
(www.starcleaner.com)

KURT / POPULAR SHAPES – split EP
You're probably familiar with Germany's KURT by now. They provide two tracks of their famous bass-heavy, lederhosen-shaking rhythmic rock on their side. This is the first I've heard of the POPULAR SHAPES since their "Bikini Style" 12" last year, and this is as good as anything on that record. Two tracks of quirky new-wavey punk with a hint of THE FALL and a healthy dollop of melody. (AM)
(On/On Switch, PO Box 641122, San Francisco, CA 94164, www.ononswitch.com)

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE – "White Science" EP
New EP from old band—LACK OF KNOWLEDGE formed amongst the wave of CRASS inspired anarcho-punk bands, and, like much of their anarcho brethren, reflected a slightly more cerebral, artsy and considered approach to punk rock—in contrast to the waves of spiky tops, glue bag fiends, and EXPLOITED clones that they co-existed with. This new recording continues on in their same style as they've always played—melodic moody punk akin to later ZOUNDS blended with early period JOY DIVISION and a smidge of the FALL. Totally dour lyrics which add to the overall depressing feel of this record—pretty good comeback release. (MT)
(Alternative, PO Box 281, Berkeley, CA 94707, www.alternativecollective.com)

LÄRM AS FUCK / HUMUS – split EP
So LÄRM AS FUCK is SEEIN' RED covering eight LÄRM songs (their former band…duh!). So of course this fucking smokes! Fast and furious and in their own words, "this is how LÄRM would have sounded with tuned guitars." HUMUS blows through a shitload of blurry thrash tracks themselves, though I would pick this up for the LÄRM AS FUCK tracks. (RC)
(WastedYouthPower, PO Box 16578, 1001 RB, Amsterdam, THE NETHERLANDS)

LAUKAUS – 12"
Total scorcher here—perhaps you remember their totally caustic barnburner of an EP from awhile back? Well here's another twelve inches worth of ripping primitive Finnish style hardcore done up by these Japanese punx—complete with lyrics in Finnish. A little less ferocious and paint peeling than their EP—they still manage to tear through their tracks at a pogo inducing pace. Great versions of STALIN and RIISTETYT songs. Essential. (MT)
(Putrid Filth Conspiracy, Box 7092, 200 42 Malmö, SWEDEN, www.putridfilth.com)

LES HELL ON HEELS – CD
An all gal four piece band with a glam look and a retro rock sound. Gearhead rock without the guitar heroics? Along the ways of the EYELINERS and JOAN JETT. A fun time and break out the hair grease and the motorcycle jacket while you're at it. (RL)
(Bomp!, rocknrollgirl_13@yahoo.com)

LET'S GROW – "Neverending Story" EP
First of all, I had no idea that LET'S GROW was from Serbia. Secondly, how in the hell is a band from Serbia better than most of the bands in this country? Anyone? Thrashy youth crew hardcore in the vein of SCHOLASTIC DETH or maybe LIFE'S HALT. Seven really well done hardcore songs, with "Five Minutes of Relax(ation)" and "Neverending Story" being my favorites. (CC)
(Know, PO Box 90579, Long Beach, CA, 90809, www.knowrecords.com)

THE LUCIFER STAR MACHINE – "Death Baby" EP
.......fuck these motherfucking pieces of SHIT!!!! This world does not need yet another young, trendy, tattooed, bullet belted, eyeliner band clad in black!!!!!! They're a dime a dozen these days!!!! And I don't give a fuck if Rat Scabies produced this garbage!!!!!! Who cares???!!! Rat Scabies sucks dog dicks!!!! The most pathetic thing about this three song EP is the press release that was stuck in the sleeve to inform reviewers like me just how cool and schooled these bozos are!!!! They call themselves "sleazy" and the "real deal."....I just call them *lame*!!!! Get your assholes ready for MTV you little bastards because your music is nothing but commercial fluff as far as I'm concerned!!!!! Do the world a favor and kill yourselves *now*!!!!(SW)
(Blacktongue, www.blacktonguerecords.net)

MAD CADDIES – "Songs In the Key of Eh?" CD
Even in the league of clown-ska bands, MAD CADDIES are not a good band. It's "Ska-core" that sounds like a less sophisticated REEL BIG FISH, if that's possible. Who asked for a live album? Apparently someone. I like this more than all the chaos punk I've gotten this month because at least it has a sense of humor, but it's still not as good as LIZ PHAIR's last album. For modern ska, take SKANKIN' PICKLE, SLOW GHERKIN, or RUDIMENTS, but stay away from this even if you do like the seals on the cover like I do. (WR)
(Fat Wreck, PO Box 193690, San Francisco, CA 94119-3690)

MALADY – LP
This eight-song train wreck is what happens when ex-members throw in the punk towel in favor of more mature music. MALADY is as "post-hardcore" as it gets—mid-paced, melodic, and mind numbing. It sounds like they filtered out the energy of a HOT WATER MUSIC record and replaced it with bland, whiney Midwestern indie rock. It is completely awful. The Golden Girls theme song rocks harder than this. (VH)
(Level Plane, 7926 Charlottesville, VA 22906)

THE MANHANDLERS – LP
An absolutely great all-female punk rock band from the musical hotbed of Chicago. What is going on in that town? I could go for the easy comparison to the TYRADES, but though they've got similarly powerful vocals, the music isn't as fractured. This is just full-on rock and roll. It doesn't hurt that the singer's name is Syd Delicious either. Fantastic. (CK)
(Criminal IQ)

MANNEQUIN – "Warps Yr Head" CD
Wow, some of the guitar sheeting laid down by this group is straight NIRVANA-style, had me looking for the Albini credit on the CD. Actually, if you can imagine Cobain's vocals fronting a band channeling the third NIRVANA LP you wouldn't be far off. Funny tho', it doesn't come off commercial in any way, nor does it sound like it should be backin' up a skate video; it's just a thick, ropy fuzz-heavy punk attack. Not bad. (RW)
(Reptilian, 403 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21231)

MASS GENOCIDE PROCESS / COMA – split EP
You see, the problem with split records is that even though what you might be doing is perfectly decent enough, you run the risk of the other side of the record just blowing you out of the water. For their part MASS GENOCIDE PROCESS do their best to crank out the metallic crust but without enough dynamics nor power to really make it rise to the top of the pile. On the flip, however, COMA ups the ante a bit—doing the same style but with tons more energy and a more go for the throat sort of approach to it…certainly an improvement over their split with BORN DEAD ICONS. (MT)
(Insane Society, PO Box 6, 501 01 Hradec Králové 2, CZECH REPUBLIC, www.insanesociety.com)

MASS SEPARATION – "Tak Mau Lagi" CD
A ripping set of tunes from this Malaysian thrash/grind outfit is what you get on this here 3" CD. Half the time the band is in fast, raging, thrash mode with high-pitched shouting and group vocals on the political choruses, and the other half they rev up to full on grind blasting. The heavier grind element is especially prevalent on the earlier tracks from splits with DREGS OF HUMANITY and KONTROVERS, but the new stuff is my favorite—I love the thrash/grind hybrid, like crossing WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? with PHOBIA. Awesome band. (EL)
(Homegrown, BLK 111, Yishun Ring Rd.,#02-367, SINGAPORE 760111, badmongo74@hotmail.com)

MELLAKKA – "R.I.P. Recordings 1984-1986"

Complete discography of this classic Finnish punk band—compiling their two EPS (Ei and Itsenäisyyspäivä) along with their final demo recordings—15 tracks in all of potent DISCHARGE meets Russia Bombs Finland-inspired hardcore—buzzsaw guitars, unyielding pounding drum attack, rapid-fire vocals—fucking amazing! The über-raw demo tracks are worth the price of admission alone! (MT)
(www.mellakka.com)

MUDDY RIVER NIGHTMARE BAND – "Who Will Be the Lucky Pierre" CD

According to their patches on their jackets, MUDDY RIVER NIGHTMARE BAND is influenced by the following: Colt 45 beer, Pabst Blue Ribbon beer, the ace of spades, the APOCALIPSTICKS, a smiley face, and Heileman's Old Style beer. According to the picture on the inside of the CD, they like to get drunk (PBRs all around!) and hang out in an abandoned bathtub by the neighborhood gas station. Not surprisingly, they have a song called "Hot Mama," and another song called "Revenge of the Surf Nazis." Trash rock aficionados take note. (GN)
(Last Chance, PO Box 42396, Portland OR, 97242)

NEON MANIACS – CD

There are some bands that you start singing along to the moment you put on their record, whether you like it or not. The STITCHES do that to me and now there is the NEON MANIACS. Lucky for me the lyrics are included. Bratty, snotty vocals with perky punk-pop tunes to back it up, as well as an appropriate amount of English styling and speed round it off. I'd call them STITCHES Jr., but these guys are better than that. (CK)
(Puke N Vomit, PO Box 3435, Fullerton, CA 92834)

NEUROTIC SWINGERS – "French Fries, Guillotine & Love" CD

Features about 50% of the songs off their *What's Your Definition of Underground* CD from a couple years ago. Put simply, it's French punk 'n' roll with a radio-friendly streak that undercuts their cut-and-paste safety-pin trappings. Fun stuff to nod your noggin along with—though lacking a little bit in terms of originality. Dig 'em. (JH)
(Dead Beat, PO Box 283, Los Angeles, CA 90078, www.deadbeatrecords.com)

THE NOISE / E.K.U.K. – split CD

Rule #1 – Split CDs are a bad idea. Rule #2 – Split CDs where the bands alternate tracks are a worse idea. Rule #3 – using a font on your split CD that makes it impossible to read one of the band names is just about the dumbest thing I've ever seen. Despite breaking all three of those rules, this is actually a pretty good CD. THE NOISE are upbeat, rocking garagey punk, while E.K.U.K. display slightly more new-wave tendencies. Either band should appeal to anyone who likes THE HIVES, say. Here's to breaking all the rules. (AM)
(Otik, PO Box 2806 #932, Torrance, CA 90509, www.otikrecords.tk)

NO SUBSTANCE – "...Teach Kids to Hate" CD

Mixing the anger and intensity of hardcore with the energy of straight forward pop-punk, NO SUBSTANCE would have fit perfectly between CRIMPSHRINE and ECONOCHRIST on an early 90s Gilman bill. It's sloppy *Cometbus*-inspired punk that isn't going to win any awards for songwriting or originality, but is—more importantly—fun and devoid of any hang ups or pretension. This is what young punk kids should be listening to instead of that preachy folk rock bullshit that everyone's talking about these days. (VH)
(Milliepeed, www.milliepeedrecords.co.uk)

OUTNAUTS – "Nightmare Cannot Be Erase" EP

What happens when you mix HENRY FIATS OPEN SORE with TEENGENERATE, then soak it in with the REGISTRATORS for a couple of seconds, making sure you've heard you fair share of 80s American hardcore to take the edge off? You get this fantastic Japanese band. Screeching and yelling at hyper speeds with enough melody to make you want to listen to this endlessly. Totally great. (CK)
(http://6666.to/outnauts)

OUTRAGE / INDIGNITY – split EP

On what is possibly the first vinyl release of any band from Bulgaria, we find these two Bulgarian metallic hardcore bands churning out the mosh—its straight-up 1993 again for both bands. Lots of E-chugs, breakdown after breakdown with a heavy political mixed with dreams of revenge lyrical bent. A bit too tough guy in its feel for daily listenings for me, but fuck its from Bulgaria! (MT)
(Bombheart, 10440 Swift Stream Place, #310, Columbia, MD 21044)

PARANOIA KEEPS COMING – "Made to be Broken" LP

From the ever-fertile German metalcore scene comes yet another awesome band of chaotic, screaming madness built upon the legacy of the mighty ACME. Not too far removed from the likes of ZEROID and such Per Koro bands as MORSER and FORCED TO DECAY, this is dark, churning, brooding heaviness awash in desperately forlorn vocals and depressive lyrics. (EL)
(Unsociable, PO Box 10 58 24 28058 Bremen, GERMANY, www.unsociable.net)

PHENOMENAUTS – "Re-Entry" CD

I've shied away from this Bay Area band, even though it seems like every 15 year old kid has their pin on, mainly because I'm not enthralled with the whole semi-retarded "dress up like your DEVO" thing. And guess what? Like "band-whose-name-I-can't-remember-because-they-weren't-good-and-who-also-dressed-up-like-they-were-not-aware-of-their-context-while-playing-a-few-years-ago-at-Gilman," this band isn't that good. I guess they have a "space-rock" thing going on with a PIXIES/surf rock vibe and ELVIS vocals, but I can't relate to that because I've never been to space or the future and don't really understand what that's all about. I think this band actually has good spirit to them. Hell, they all dressed up like Silver Surfer; you gotta give 'em that, along with the fact that the songs are kind of catchy. (WR)
(Springman, PO Box 2043, Cupertino, CA 95015, www.springmanrecords.com)

POINTING FINGER – "Best Bruises Collection" CD

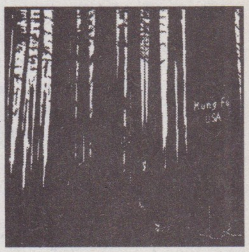
Oh, I know what you're thinking—I mean their name is fucking POINTING FINGER, but seriously this is awesome. If you like sXe hardcore of the YOUTH OF TODAY style at all, you will eat this up like Floyd ate my ice cream last night. Totally intense, fast as all get out, with a raw sloppiness that just adds to the energy level—they just clobber most of the stuff in the genre I've heard as of late ('cept the FIRST STEP, but...). I understand that it might be hard to get past the name at first, but really, trust me—this totally smokes! (MT)
(Still Holding On, c/o Xavier Lepage, 65 Au Long Pré, 4053 Embourg, BELGIUM, www.stillholdingon.free.fr)

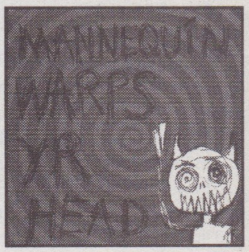
PUGET SOUND / KID BLUNT – split CD

I do not at all feel bad about not remembering what BRAID sounded like, though I think PUGET SOUND is it. Definitely emo. But they aren't slow and whiny the way SUNNY DAY REAL ESTATE was. A lot of melodies and harmonies, but the music is heavy, quirky, and somewhat complex. A little bit jammy, but not at all math rock. Four songs later we have KID BLUNT who, despite the awful name, are the better of the two bands on this split CD. A bit more interesting and dynamic, but not enough to justify buying the CD. Bottom line, I'm bored. (VH)
(Rejected, www.rejectedireland.cjb.net)

THE PUT-DOWNS – "Corrupted" EP

The PUT-DOWNS continue to slay! This time the PUT-DOWNS baffle me with a political song about Dubya and those steadfast and roving bass licks. An excellent record that will have collectors and fans scrambling to get their grubby hands on a copy from this limited 300 copy pressing. (HM)
(Mortville, PO Box 4263, Austin, TX 78765, www.mortvillerecords.com)





RSO – "I Wanna Fuck / Space Commander"

Two tracks of simple, bratty punk rock. I kept waiting for the first song to do something but it's basically the same riff and snippet of vocals repeated over and over again. "Space Commander" is more of a real song and it's pretty good in an early FLAG kind of way but without the element of danger. The lyrics sound pretty interesting when you can make them out. (AM)

(RSO, www.lostinthefuture.net/RSO)

RATS INTO ROBOTS / TEXTBOOK TRAITORS – split EP

RATS INTO ROBOTS play precise, pummeling hardcore with nods to power violence and screamo. TEXTBOOK TRAITORS are a little more rhythmic but share some of the same tendencies. Both bands owe a little to bands like DEAD AND GONE and HIS HERO IS GONE. They complement each other well and it's all packaged very nicely. Good job. (AM)

(Magic Bullet, PO Box 2370, Merrifield, VA 22116, www.magicbulletrecords.com)

RAZOR BLADES – "Songs from the Edge" CD

Many thanks to Brian GTA for putting together this discography of this great totally savage Danish hardcore destruction unit—compiling their releases from 1982 to 1984. Included are their Plastic Messiah EP, their split EP with FLERE DODE PANSERE plus demo and live tracks. Primitive, raw blasts of frantic, slightly out of control hardcore. Totally great release! (MT)

(Grand Theft Audio, 501 West Glenoaks Blvd., PMB 313, Glendale, CA 91202)

REFUSENIKS – "Nineteen to the Dozen" LP

REFUSENIKS play fast hardcore punk with melodic parts thrown in. They end up sounding something like KID DYNAMITE, though they are a little more all over the place than that band. Lyrically, they have great ideas but don't pull it off in a way that holds my interest. (WR)

(One Leaf, 104 Bonny Lane, North Andover, MA 01845)

REPLY – "Rage Scream Live" LP

Chaotic metalcore precisely in the style of genre leaders CONVERGE, BOTCH and so on. This (I think now defunct) Belgian band has a good amount of intensity to their playing but the note-for-note similarity to the aforementioned bands is a turn-off for me. The title track kicking off side B, however, is one of the best songs I've heard all month. Instead of trying to out-tech CONVERGE, it's just a slow, mostly quiet melodic dirge of a riff that's beautiful, hypnotic and totally effective in its build and release into an eventual heavy counterpoint. If the band still exists hopefully they'll explore this path instead of becoming another forgotten clone. (EL)

(Grave Escape, PO Box 117, 8500 Kortrijk, BELGIUM, escapethegrave@yahoo.com)

RIISTETERROR – "Asema Z" EP

The RIISTETYT / SICK TERROR project band continues to crank out the goods—though this time they end up sounding more straight up like RIISTETYT than an amalgam of the two bands—totally classic hectic Finnish-style hardcore, complete with vocals just soaked in reverb. I'll still take Skitsofrenia over this but… (MT)

(Fight, Hikivuorenkatu 17 D 36, 33710 Tampere, FINLAND, www.kolumbus.fi/fight)

RIOT/CLONE – "Mad Sheep Disease" EP

This band's been around a long time, so it's nice to see that they're still at it and that age hasn't mellowed them out too much. Angry and political British mid-tempo punk with lyrics dealing with the war, suburban malaise, and the apparent conspiracy involving the September 11th Pentagon attack. They remind me a little of EXIT-STANCE or even ANTHRAX. Good. (AD)

(Alternative, PO Box 281, Berkeley, CA 94101)

ROGERS SISTERS – "Three Fingers" LP

Unique, assured, and instantly memorable. The ROGERS SISTERS are a three-piece outfit that turn out smart, hard-edged pop and 'wave that displays effortless style, depth, and low-down thrills. Punk? Maybe in the broadest sense of the term, and in their choice of bare-bones instrumentation and sideways lyrical sentiments. I can hear echoes of WIRE, X-RAY SPEX, MAGAZINE, modern-day indie-infused pop and thoughtful rock action on *Three Fingers*—the influences are there, but these two sisters and non-brother are able to cobble together something fresh and *individual.* Art in the service of rock, if you will. The ROGERS SISTERS swing. (JH)

(Troubleman Unlimited, 16 Willow St., Bayonne, NJ 07002, www.troublemanunlimited.com)

ROLLING BLACKOUTS – "Black is Beautiful" LP

Getting funky with the rawk, punk or otherwise, can be a dicey proposition; for every RED ONIONS that makes it work, there are handfuls of bands that come up with lukewarm, un-soulful non-rock. ROLLING BLACKOUTS is another band that has the songs and the vocal abilities to make it work, though their thang is more smooth-and-heavy than the spazzy and abrasive stuff I tend to cleave on to. (DD)

(Record Collection, 1223 Wilshire Blvd. #811, Santa Monica, CA 90403)

SBV – "Oppressive Common Denomenator" EP

Eight blasts of positive hardcore with a definite UNIFORM CHOICE meets GORDON SOLIE MOTHERFUCKERS feel to it—both in music and the vocals. Speedy and tuneful thrash done up with some well done, heartfelt lyrics dealing with being a nerd, combating mainstream concepts of beauty and anti-big business in hardcore. Good stuff. (MT)

(Parts Unknown)

SCHOLASTIC DETH – "Final Examiner" CD

A great discography CD packed with photos, lyrics, "commentary," and fliers to go along with the 50-track onslaught of the fast, high energy, straightforward hardcore that you know and love. It's positive hardcore for students of all ages. How can you argue? This disc includes everything they did—the three EPs, all their comp tracks, some live on KZSU stuff, and two unreleased tracks. The only thing I'm sketchy about is the Cliff Notes theme. Punks generalize enough as it is. Aside from that, I gotta give 'em an A. (VH)

(625, www.625thrash.com)

SCIENCE OF YARBA – "Don't Panic" LP

Cool full length from this Portland outfit that makes me think one part DRIVE LIKE JEHU and another part RITES OF SPRING—intricate, complex, and driving guitar work back up by a fairly simple yet totally effective rhythm section. I honestly haven't listen to stuff like this in like ten years or more, but this certainly holds up well to bands like the prior mentioned or stuff like THUMBNAIL. (MT)

(Code Of Ethics, 3127 N Aveniba Laural Real, Tucson, AZ 85712, codeofethicsrecs@hotmail.com)

SELF DEFENSE – "Megatonpunkdisruptor" EP

This is a great posthumous release by this New York-based hardcore/punk band. I have pretty much enjoyed everything this band has done, from their record on Uncle Slam to their split with XFILESX, and this last release is no exception. Recorded over a year ago, this seven-song blazer contains songs about taking back the punk scene from people set to commercialize it, the connection between war and religion, the mandatory "fuck work" song, as well as other "up the system" topics. Everything about this record is solid with the exception of the profane use of the cowbell on a few tracks. Just say no…to the cowbell. (CC)

(38 Wall St., Valhalla, NY, 10595)

SENSE OF PURPOSE – "Tomorrow's Too Late" CD

SENSE OF PURPOSE play mid-paced to fast modern hardcore that is heavily influence by the Bridge 9 Records roster (CHAMPION, TERROR, and GUTG). This Australian band definitely look and sound like they are having a great time playing the music they play, though with one too many vocalists, and *way* too many guitar octaves, I just can't get into most of it. My suggestion would be more songs like "Concept" and "Autonomy," and less songs like "Almost Sunset" and "The Cost and Counting." This of course is just one man's opinion. (CC)

(Go Team, www.go-teamrecords.com)

SEXAPHONE – "My Baby Don't Like Nobody" EP

Members of one of the only UK garage bands of the last fifteen years, the BLACK TIME, working out their anxieties in a more art-garage vector. The vibe is very 1993 cassette-punk, like something on a long-gone Olympia "project" label. Jeez, there are a lot of ambitious bands that are trying to get to the "essentials," and they end up sounding like the CORRECTIONS, BRATMOBILE or other NW fragile oddities and sundries. The songs on this are not great, but they are timely as all fuck. Shelf life? (RW)

(Heart Out)

SHEMPS – "Spazz Out With the Shemps" CD

Thick-neck production on what is basically a down-to-earth, barkin' punk rock band. The bass player is *MRR*'s Bill Florio, so you can possibly see this CD as background music for reading his column. There's venom aplenty in the lyrical department and the band has its musical shit together, so all the Northeast fans of the band can relax, they didn't fuck up their full length. Punk Rock Central. (RW)

(Reservation, 7101 SE Reed College Pl, Portland OR, 97202)

THIS SHIP WILL SINK – "You Are Precisely… " CD

Imagine KING CRIMSON on crystal meth with a pickup truck full of handguns and you've got THIS SHIP WILL SINK. This crazed three-piece pound out a four song assault of fast, metallic hardcore that's packed with blast beats, spastic breaks, and changes. Filled with anger and rage, THIS SHIP WILL SINK is musically complex and aggressive while socio-politically conscious lyrically. Personally, I'm turned off by the prog-rock element that has creeped into hardcore over the past couple years, but as far as the trend goes THIS SHIP WILL SINK do a great job of it. (VH)

(Magic Bullet, 17 Argyle Hills Dr., Fredericksburg, VA 22405)

SHOPLIFTING – LP

A mini LP on arty stuff in the early PIL and SLITS vein, only without the attitude. Not unlike a lot of US bands from artier labels in the post-punk age of the 80s. I thought this might be a vintage recording but it

is current. So-so at best. (RL)
(Kill Rock Stars)

SHURIKEN – "Evacuate / Disintegrate" CD
Good pop punk from the UK. A bit of emo tendencies too. Think the guy in DASHBOARD CONFESSIONAL singing for GAMEFACE or like band. This grabbed me a bit initially—but with only six songs here, I'm not completely won over just yet. (RL)
(You And Whose Army?, PO Box 34398, London, NW6 4XT, UNITED KINGDOM, www.shuriken.co.uk)

SIN DIOS / CONTRASTO – split EP
SIN DIOS is *always* top notch in my book—quick paced blasts of anthemic driving Spanish hardcore with a strong anarchist message. Great, great, great—and this EP serves as good an introduction to them as any. CONTRASTO are an Italian band that cranks out three tracks of blast-beat fueled raging hardcore for their side—with rapid fire spat out vocals in Italian. Good split. (MT)
(Agipunk, www.agipunk.com)

SIT N' SPIN – "Doin' Time With" CD
This all gal combo sounds like the early MUFFS without the attack or screaming. This does have that pure rock 'n' roll and pop mix of the MUFFS early singles and first two LPs. Good mid-tempo power pop for those summer nights at the drive in. (RL)
{Blood Red, PO Box 12549, Portland, OR 97212, mail@sitnspin1.com)

SKITKIDS / EXHALE – split EP
SKITKIDS! This band is exactly what makes me love everything about DIY punk. They play angry, fast, uncompromising music that still remains fun. Oh yes, and they write lyrics that actually mean something to the listener rather than stringing together more boring and pretentious sentences that don't mean anything to anyone including the writer. What you get with the SKITKIDS that you don't get with most bands these days is originality without straying away from sounding punk, positive sincerity, crazy, screaming leads and vocals, and Swedish hardcore equaled by only a few bands like TOTALITÄR and NO SECURITY. EXHALE from Japan are not so far off from their Swedish counterparts on this split either. Their music brings to mind RESIST with a bit more of a hardcore anthem feel to it. Their vocals are growled out with a lot of style, and are reminiscent of a lot of Japanese "Burning Spirits"-styled bands. Unfortunately for us, their lyrics aren't translated, but there are a couple of lines in English that could clue one in as to what they are singing about. This is a great record. (WK)
(Putrid Filth Conspiracy, Box 7092, 20042 Malmö, SWEDEN. www.putridfilth.com)

SKITSYSTEM – "Allt E Skit" LP
Total fucking Swedish crust gods early material compiled onto one easy format—their Profithysteri EP, Ondsks Ansikte 10", and their split EP with WOLFPACK. Personally this is my favorite stuff of all their release especially the Profithysteri EP. Heavy as fuck, totally crushing, relentless Swedish crust that just bulldozes over your face. Awesome. (MT)
(Havoc, PO Box 8585, Minneapolis, MN 55408, www.havocrex.com)

SMD – "Hatefed Motherfucker 666" CD
Straight-up, no-frills, old-school, mid-late-80s SoCal crossover thrash here for anyone who wore out their old DRI and NUCLEAR ASSAULT albums long ago. This is just sheer straight-ahead speed from note one. The vocals are barked out at rapid-fire speed, but my favorite part is the bass guitar, which is just insanely fast on every track. Happy music this is not—just pure beer-fueled misanthropic bile spewed at a hundred miles an hour. (EL)
(Six Weeks, 225 Lincoln Ave, Cotati, CA 94931, sixweeksrecords.com)

SOS – "We Drown Because We Can" CDEP
Members of CRUNCH TIME play well-executed but ultimately bland emo-hardcore. Another example of what happens to straight-edge hardcore kids when they discover their mature side. Even the majestic unicorn on the cover of this CD can't save this band from sounding like an even further indie-rockified, umpteenth generation LIFETIME. Sorry, dudes. (GN)
(Perfect Victim, PO Box 52084, Boston MA, 02205)

SOUND OF FAILURE / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION JACKSON – split EP
Two blazing modern Philly hardcore bands—AFFIRMATIVE ACTION JACKSON blast through five tracks which alternate between being slightly off-kilter and tense to being more driving and straight forward. On the flip SOUND OF FAILURE rock it on three cuts of noisier hardcore with nod to the early 90s sound of bands like ICONOCLAST or JOHN HENRY WEST. Includes a SKEWBALD cover. (MT)
(Dine Alone, PO Box 63539, Philadelphia, PA 19147, www.dinealoneproductions.com)

SPITZZ – "Sick, Savage & Sensual" CD
Note the disclaimer: this ain't the well-known Pacific Northwest drool-synth punk group: these SPITZZ live and play a continent away, don't feature keyboards, and deal in trebly squeals (instead of the bottom-heavy buzz of the West Coast SPITS). These kids exhibit a lot of energy and fun-loving negative vibes on tunes like "I Need It," "TV Dinner Man," and Unnatural." Sick, savage, and (anti)sensual it is. To-the-point, passionate, and driven by the burning need to annoy. One hopes they'll still be standing after the War of the Spits has reached its bloody conclusion. (JH)
(Tarantulas, 411A Highland Ave. #348, Somersville, MA 02144)

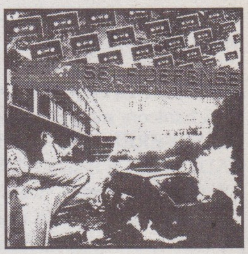
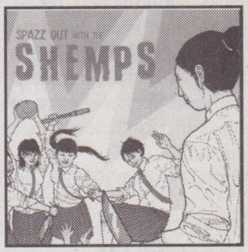
STAND AGAINST – "Until the End" CD
This is an interesting blend of fast hardcore that rides a fine line between metallic street punk and metal hardcore. The metal-tinged guitars, heavy breakdowns, and gang vocals at times remind me of later SICK OF IT ALL, yet sometimes their choruses and guitar leads remind me of an early 90s East Bay punk band. The intensity and talent is definitely there, I just wish they could pick a style and go with it rather than being all over the place. Good, but it could be better. (CC)
(My Own Wallet)

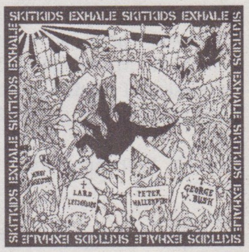
STATE OF FEAR – "Discography" LP
STATE OF FEAR always delivered the goods for me—driving, powerful guitar driven, riff-laden, highly-political hardcore with a slight crust feel with some of my favorite vocals stylings for the genre ever. This LP compiles their Wallow in Squalor EP, Tables Will Turn… LP (my personal favorite stuff), and their eponymous final EP. Members went on to do time in Seattle's CONSUME—in case you're keeping score. So if you slept on their releases the first time around… (MT)
(Profane Existence, PO Box 8722, Minneapolis, MN 55408, www.profaneexistence.com)

STATIONS – "Tune Out the Static" CD
Star City's heavy hitters, STATIONS, deliver eleven beer-swillin' ditties including a "hidden" FLIPPER cover. Most tunes have a LOWER CLASS BRATS feel and the rest are more punk-n-roll. Good stuff. (HM)
(www.thisisstations.com)

STICK BOY – "Sumo" CD
These Germans sing in English and play some spunky, melodic punk. They're pretty goofy with songs like "Hippies on Parade," "Jesus Christ Superpimp," and "Fistosterone." STICK BOY'S sound can be anything from the SAINTS to ZEN GUERRILLA to HUSKER DU. Pretty cool. (HM)
(Consul, Mainzerstr. 1, 661111 Saarbrucken, GERMANY)

STOCKYARD STOICS – "Catastrophe" CD
Ten rousing lefty political anthems...SS (!?) manage to combine the sensibilities and attack of ANTI-FLAG, the raging spirit of DILLINGER FOUR, and the loose melodies and bark of LEFTOVER CRACK. A cracking effort. Well worth tracking down, even if the copious (and informative) booklet doesn't have



any info on the label, and very little on the band. (RK)
(Bankshot!, www.bankshotrecords.com)

STALINS WAR – "Rebirth from Flames" CD

Congratulations, you're the next contestant on the Worst Band I've Ever Heard show. Come on down, and bring your AVENGED SEVENFOLD t-shirt with you. (EL)
(Un-Fun, www.unfunrecords.com)

THE STRANGLERS – "Apollo Revisited" 2xLP

This classy live double-album offers seventeen songs from a band that slipped in with'77 British punk. Recorded in 1981, this includes liberal tuneage from their lackluster *Meninblack* period. Pretty richly recorded, with satisfactory renditions of "Hangin' Around," "Bring on the Nubiles," and "Nuclear Device, " along with lots of longer, more drawn out stuff. In fact, the performance left me as indifferent as when I saw them long ago. I like the heavy vinyl and cool gatefold sleeve, but I recommend you scrounge up a copy of their *Raven* LP if you really need a live fix. (SS)
(Alchemy c/o Abraxas srl – via Aretina, 25 50069 Seici (Firenze) ITALY)

SUICIDE BLITZ – "Ride the Steel" 12"

A hardcore supergroup featuring members of DS-13, SEVERED HEAD OF STATE, WOLFBRIGADE, BRUCE BANNER, VICTIMS, NO SECURITY and many more, whose final product doesn't come anywhere close to adding up to the sum of its parts. If I understand the liner notes correctly, this 12" was recorded after only three weeks together as a band. Unfortunately for SUICIDE BLITZ, it shows. More time spent on songwriting should have produced a good record from these veteran punks. This, however, is not that record, as *Ride the Steel is* altogether a very mediocre record of mid-tempo punk tunes that isn't nearly as catchy or memorable as it should be. (GN)
(Hate, PO Box 105824, 28058 Bremen, GERMANY)

SWING DING AMIGOS – "The Mongolita Chronicles" CD

Shite name, great disc. Fuzzed out punk rock, the likes of which would not seem out of place on the Rip Off roster. These cats have the cheeky, infectious tunes of the MARKED MEN/REDS mixed with the garage slop of bands like the KILLOWATTS and the herky-jerky rock of the BARFEEDERS. Good stuff. (TB)
(Rock N Roll Purgatory, 710 Arch St, Salem, OH 44460)

TAMORA – "There's No Tomorrow…" CD

New school hardcore with that metallic flare, choppy rhythms, and screamed/passionate vocal approach that the kids seem to be eating up nowadays. For this style I guess this is pretty good, but I have never liked the emo-ish feel of these sorts of bands. I would prefer to be battered with crazy metal riffs and slaughtering vocals and to leave this "emotional" stuff on the cutting room floor. (RC)
(Happy Couples Never Last, PO Box 36997, Indianapolis, IN 46236-0997)

A TASTE FOR MURDER – "Italian Girls (The Best in the World)" CD

Melodic and catchy, but undeniably tough. A TASTE FOR MURDER delivers ten tracks of modern hardcore packed with break downs and chugga chugga played through clean marshal amps. No real surprises. Depending on your tolerance for this kind of stuff it could easily be argued as "cookie cutter" or "perfectly executed." Why they chose the artwork they did really confuses me. But I've got to say that the best part of this CD is, without a doubt, the Italian girls—Victoria, Shaundra, Lucia, Jamie, Kelly, and Lisa. (VH)
(High Fidelity, PO Box 1071, Grover Beach, CA 93483)

TOILET BOYS – "The Early Years" CD

A release including two early releases from this glam punk rock band. Due to lack of production (or budget I suppose) these songs come across more as 80s poseur metal and less like rock 'n' roll. The POISON cover doesn't help. I do like this band and have enjoyed their persona live. This is for TOILET BOYS completists. (RL)
(Ozit Morpheus, PO Box 67082, Century City Station, Los Angeles, CA 90067, www.toiletboys.com)

TOTAL VERLUST – LP

Most of the songs on here smoke! Bouncy and aggressive punk rock for punk rockers. Aspects of SLIME and 80s South American punk can be heard. The 3/4 of the record that sounds like that is fucking wonderful. Unfortunately there are two or three songs on here that go for the crushing tragedy-Japanese-t-shirt-band sound. Look past the stinkers and you have a quality record on your hands. (NT)
(www.suburban-hardcore.tk)

TRAPDOOR FUCKING EXIT – "Devil's Egg / Alien City"

From Sweden, TRAPDOOR FUCKING EXIT is heavy but melodic. You could maybe put them in with a band like HOT WATER MUSIC, because they have a huge bass-y punk sound, but there is guitar stuff going on underneath that reminds me of a DRIVE LIKE JEHU or something a little quirkier. I think they strive to be different and are doing an okay job but shouldn't hide behind their amps as much. I really like their lyrics as well. I can't easily sum them up, but they are sincere and sound fresh and relevant. (WR)
(No Idea, PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL, 32604, www.noidearecords.com)

TRAVOLTAS – "The Highschool Reunion" CD

On their latest, these Euros tone it down a bit. The keyboards are a bit higher in the mix at the expense of guitar. I guess if they are known for being a combo of the RAMONES and the BEACH BOYS, this is their *End of the Century* without crazy Phil. There are some great songs on this including the radio ready "Class of '88." Still a great band that mixes it up a little on this one. (RL)
(Fastmusic, PO Box 206512, New Haven, CT 06520, www.travoltas.com)

TREND – "Gott Hot Keine Flugzeuge / Keine Zeit"

Weird German new wave tinged pop-punk that reminds me a bit of post-*On the Mouth* SUPERCHUNK or the first PORTASTATIC record—catchy poppy tunes that stick in your head, but don't really have the right amount of grit for me to really get into. Maybe you though… (MT)
(Plastic Bomb, Swen, Postfach 100205, 47002 Duisburg, GERMANY, www.plasticbombrecords.de)

TRISTESS – "Vad Ska Vi Bli?" CD

This is totally hot—primitive snotty Swedish punk rock. Nine punchy and raw cuts that borrow heavy from an ASTA KASK (though not as fast) meets EBBA GRÖN meets *Bloodstains Across…* model that's certain to get the kids pogoing up and down like fucking mad! The production is nearly fucking perfect—highlighting the perfect sloppiness and their near-genius song-smithing. Can just see the nerds sloshing their beers around going fucking bananas—now where's the fucking vinyl? Ex-Demon System 13 and I believe ETA for those keeping score. Pick of the month? Probably. (MT)
(Cage Match Federation, c/o Kaj Sivervik, Kvaernvägen 15A, 903 20 Umeå, SWEDEN)

THE ULSERS – "Golden Showers" EP

Along with bands like BLACK TIME and REAL LOSERS, the ULSERS appear to be another promising new UK band obsessed with that gosh-darned Rip Off Records sound. Although their speedy bonehead attack is more akin to ZODIAC KILLERS than the RIP OFFS, they definitely have the sound and attitude down cold. While I would normally be overjoyed to see a seven-song single, this slab has way too much filler. I'm not quite sold on them yet, but that could change by their next release. (MC)
(Oddball, theulsers@hotmail.com)

TWINKIE –CD

This sounds like a bunch of Pot Noodle munching, Australian Soap-watching students who decided to start a band, and recorded their first steps. You can hear them coming up with some good ideas, but rarely do those ideas come together to form anything resembling a song. Occasionally they start to sound like something that might have shown up on Guided Missile records, and when they actually get coherent, they sound not unlike the fabulous HUGGY BEAR, but it seems to be more by accident than by design. This fourteen track CD could have been culled down to an excellent EP; as it is it sounds like someone's early demo. (AM)
(Avesbury)

UNDER SIEGE / A TRAITOR LIKE JUDAS – split CD

Sorry, this just sucks. This is totally generic metalcore from Germany, shifting between HATEBREED-style beat-down mosh parts and more melodic HEAVEN SHALL BURN-type parts, but nowhere near as good. Both bands sound similar enough for me not to care to listen closely enough to discern all the subtle nuances I'm sure I'm missing. The vocals of UNDER SIEGE are particularly unbearable. Avoid this like the drunk guy with ringworm at crust shows. (EL)
(Let it Burn, Erzgiessereistr. 51, 80335, Munich, GERMANY, www.letitburnrecords.com)

VAMPIRE LOVERS – "13 Tasteless Masterpieces" CD

The VAMPIRE LOVERS are a band name that I recall from the pages *Maximum Rock 'n' Roll* and *FlipSide* in years long, long gone by—never heard 'em, but they must have boasted a really snazzy logo (or something). *13 Tasteless Masterpieces* is a collection of this (Brisbane) group's better material, recorded from '82-'84 and '88-'90. It's not as crazed, manic, or socially-irresponsible as I'd hoped—rather, it's pretty eyes-forward British-style plodding punk rock with some flange effects on the guitar and lyrics about zombies , girlfriends from Mars, and chainsaw massacrees. "Buzzsaw Popstar" and "Gothic School of Twilight Punk" starts it all off on a promising note but it kinda deflates as the tunes trundle past at a measured clip. A little disappointing, this is. (JH)
(Magic Monster, PO Box 207, Baldock, SG7 6ZL Herts, ENGLAND, www.magic-monster.com)

VAN SAC – "Ugly and Alive" EP

New Jersey's Distort Label has unearthed a real gem for you punks and thrashers. This four-song EP

is the first vinyl appearance of a 1986 cassette demo by mad Swedes VAN SAC, whose bass player was the singer in the original line-up of ANTI-CIMEX The band played very few shows and barely even circulated this demo tape, which until now has only been heard by the most obsessive of Swedish hardcore die-hards. Suffice it to say, this is raw and fast in the classic Swedish tradition, with wild vocals and a guitar sound almost on par with *Raped Ass*. VAN SAC is unmistakably Swedish hardcore, but the recording quality on this record makes it sound almost garage-y and—dare I say—fun. The often-shouted vocals are more ABSURD than they are CRUDE SS, in any case. Be warned, though—this record sold out almost instantly, so it might already be a bit tough to track down a copy. After all, it's not so easy to find those DISARM 7"s either, so why should this be any different, right? (GN)
(Distort Label, PO Box 3400, Wallington NJ, 07057)

VARUKERS – "Murder" CD
CD reissue of this long running UK band's 1997 LP Murder along with their Nothing's Changed EP. I figure most readers are familiar with their DISCHARGE-meets-CHAOS UK style so I won't go much further with the description. Murder certainly is no Another Religion, Another War but it taint too shabby neither. I can just see the spiky tops now—sack of glue in one hand, bottle of cider in the other, pogoing like fucking mad!! Punk as fuck! (MT)
(Rodent Popsicle, www.rodentpopsicle.com)

THE VICIOUS 5 – "The Electric Chants of the Disenchanted" CDEP
Angular, spastic punk from Portugal—reminds me a bit of a mix between an overproduced YAH-MOS and a less garagey INTERNATIONAL NOISE CONSPIRACY. Jangly guitars, lotsa interesting unexpected twists and turns and snotty vocals. Songs about revolution and sex—certainly not the worst things to sing about. Something just feels missing…(MT)
(www.thevicious5.com)

VIOLENT MINDS – "Riot" EP
I've often thought about putting an official ban on reviewers using NEGATIVE APPROACH to describe any record—as 99 times out 100 they aren't even close to being right. This record, however, would be the exception to that rule. A project band made up East Coast hardcore scene luminaries (members of SHARK ATTACK and NO WARNING amongst others) VIOLENT MINDS crank out three fierce cuts of simple, stripped-down, pounding hardcore punk that employs a heavy NEGATIVE APPROACH meets BLITZ meets a razorblade in your throat attack. The title track "Riot" is a total sing-a-long pit inducing, mid-tempo, stomper—and probably one of the best hardcore jams I've heard in months. My only issue with the record? The cover artwork is just a rip-off of the BLITZKRIEG EP on No Future; well actually it is the cover artwork of the BLITZKRIEG EP on No Future with the VIOLENT MINDS logo in the place of BLITZKRIEG. C'mon now ya yobs, you can do better than that! Otherwise, totally great! (MT)
(Parts Unknown)

VOICE IN THE WIRE – "Signals in Transmission" CD
One of those emo-ish punk bands that has a lot going on at all times. Catchy vocals, choruses, guitar riffs, guitar lines, and drum chops. Somewhere in between FACE TO FACE, HOT WATER MUSIC, and a melodic hardcore band. This is tight and rocking so it gets my thumbs up. A good full length. (RL)
(Eyeball, www.voiceinthewire.com)

THE VON STIENS – "Seconds / Hot Sex"
Remember, just cause it's got those *Space 1999* keyboards doesn't make it new wave. The VON STIENS have too much guitar, too much sneer, and are way too heavy on the attitude to be lumped in with all the other glossy hipster new wavers. They manage to come off as part WIPERS, part B-52s, a slice of BERLIN, and some off the ol' static posturing of the SPITS. Busy, catchy, and most importantly oozing with abundant charm. (SD)
(Fancy Bulge, 16703 Westgate Ave, Cerritos, CA 90703, assailmo@yahoo.com)

WASTED – " Heroes Amongst Thieves" LP
Fuck, how good are WASTED?! Second question, why the fuck don't I have one damn single release by these Finns? Oh, the eternal mysteries off my record collection. This is street punk the way it is supposed to be, like the type mastered by fellow Scandinavians SMALLTOWN. Angst-ridden, passion-filled punk rock with enough soul to rival any of Detroit's past best. Their third long-play release, with a crisper production than before, guitars high in the crunch, and definitely more of that old school feel mastered by current faves NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS. Introspective, reflective, and political lyrics to accompany their almost SOCIAL DISTORTION meets STIFF LITTLE FINGERS sound, with the beautifully strained vocals of Mr. Ville Ronkko to make this one of this year's best. (SD)
(Combat Rock, PO Box 65, 11101 Rmk, FINLAND, www.fireinsidemusic.com)

WITCH HUNT – "EPs & Crucial Chaos Radio Session" CD
As is indicated in the title, this CD compiles WITCH HUNT's early EP material plus a set recorded live on the radio. For the unfamiliar WITCH HUNT play an eclectic mix of crust, more melodic peace punk and a bit of East Coast hardcore for a slightly uneven result. I'm more of a fan of their more melodic and peace punk side myself—though I must admit their cover of SIEGE's "Conform" comes across quite nicely. (MT)
(Profane Existence, PO Box 8722, Minneapolis, MN 55408, www.profaneexistence.com)

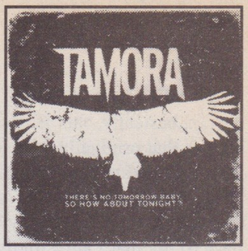
WORKERS ETIQUETTE MANUAL – "The Haves vs. the Have Nots" CD
Dark, aggressive hardcore from Germany that batters you with an onslaught of repetitive mid-tempo riffs and barked vocals. My interest started to wane just a bit towards the end of the CD, but this is still a powerhouse. Fans of guitar heavy bands like ANODYNE will dig this. (RC)
(workersetiquettemanual.org)

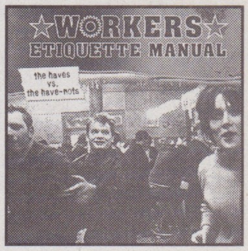
WRANGLER BRUTES – "Zulu" LP
These guys are in a serious hurry, but they also have a lot to say, so you're gonna have to sort of run alongside to keep up. The full lyric sheet makes taking notes a lot easier, and the tone of the verbage reads kind of familiar, is this vocalist a...*scene veteran*? The music is pure early 80s hardcore without disappearing into a thrash blizzard, and the result is a powerful, raging pants-slapper of a platter. Now this would be a fun band to see at Gilman. Vitamin P personified. (RW)
(3733 Seneca Ave, LA, CA 90039)

14 YEAR OLD GIRLS – "Strategy Guide" CD
Lo-fi techo punk in the HELEN LOVE, CAPRICORNS, and LE TIGRE vein. Mostly speedy and fuzzed out. Much silliness too. A fun release. (RL)
(Retard Disco, PO Box 461163, Los Angeles, CA 90046, www.retarddisco.com)

ZEROID – "2004" LP
This makes my head hurt. Time changes, growling screamed vocals, technical guitars, lots of taping cymbals...the list goes on and on and on. I don't even know what to make of it. Music for skinny white boys with bad haircuts to dance to. On the upside, it does come in very sturdy packaging. Very sturdy indeed. (NT)
(www.perkororecords.com)

ZONE – "Squeezed State" LP
Mikey Thorn was right, dinosaurs are truly the new pirates in punk. This cover has a sweet velociraptor on the cover with tattoos all over his body. It's definitely strange and cool at the same time. Japan's ZONE lean more to an American style of hardcore, at times reminding me of mid-period AGNOSTIC FRONT, at other times later POISON IDEA. Despite their fast rockin' riffs and profuse vocal back-ups, I just can't get past the bad English. Lyrics like, "Little mouse, hurry up gone mad/Mad mouse, don't like enjoy/little vice, hurry up gone mouse/little mouse gone mad" had me rolling with laughter. This is good, if you can get





past the lyrics. (CC)
(Partners in Crime, PO Box 11787, Portland, OR. 97211)

V/A – "The Best of Bomp: Vol. 1" LP

.......basically, this is a collection of early Bomp singles that originally came out back in 1978 and has been reissued many, many times over the last couple of decades......this current pressing is on 180 gram vinyl which is real trendy these days......!!!!!!! I'll have to say that I am a lifetime fan of Mr. Greg Shaw and his amazing magazine and record label!!!! The man has got great taste and I respect his opinions on music all the way down the line!!!!! He's a true pioneer, that's for sure.......and his wife makes the best Christmas cookies!!!!!!!! This comp contains the likes of 20/20, FLAMIN' GROOVIES, POPPIES, WACKERS, CHOIR, VENUS & THE RAZORBLADES, IGGY & THE STOOGES, SNATCH, WEIRDOS, SHOES, ZEROS, DMZ, and my favorite Boston bed buddies WILLIE ALEXANDER & THE BOOM BOOM BAND doing "Kerouac," which is a song that still makes me melt!!!!!! Just one listen to this classic old comp will make any sensible music fan want to suck the spunk out of Mr. Shaw's cock and spit it in the face of Epitaph records!!!!! Fuck all of you MISFITS listening mall punks!!!! *Go die with the rest of your lame punk rock heroes, you scum!!!!!* (SW)
(Bomp, PO Box 7112, Burbank, Ca 91510)

V/A – "California Republic" CD

Was initially pretty stoked to get this compilation of Northern California bands, as CROPKNOX are a local favorite of mine, the ABUSE EP from about a year ago showed some promise and the recent MONSTER SQUAD set I saw displayed a degree of speed and hardcore energy that I hadn't seen in them prior to that show, while WHISKEYREBELS I had never heard before, despite them having been playing around the Bay Area for sometime. MONSTER SQUAD certainly fulfill their promise—speedy UK 82-esque hardcore punk with tons of angst and energy. WHISKEY REBELS look like they could and would kick my ass, but come off like mall hardcore-lite. Just kinda ultra-slick, ultra-melodic, fake-fast hardcore that might fit in well on Fat. They even totally ruin their cover of NEGATIVE APPROACH's "Tied Down," especially when they throw in the terrible breakdown that wasn't in the original for a fucking reason! The ABUSE retain their cool early female fronted UK punk with a slight tinge of Oi vibe (think VICE SQUAD—well sorta). CROPKNOX's songs feel more like throw aways than what was represented on their great debut single or their recent LP—just lacking in the appropriate energy or punch. Overall, decent enough, especially for the MONSTER SQUAD tracks but kind of a let down. (MT)
(Rodent Popsicle, www.rodentpopsicle.com)

V/A – "Damage, Destruction, Terror and Mayhem" CD

Cool, a scene comp, I've always loved 'em. Really. This one's on the wrong format, though. Bellingham in Washington State has been garage rock central for over a decade (to outsiders anyway), but there ain't no blues worship on this disc, it's all punk-punker-punkest. You get bands like FULL FRONTAL ASSAULT, AXES OF EVIL, FINAL HOUR, NO UTOPIA and FUTURE CITY FEAR channeling the restless ghosts of early 80s punk, along with some late 80s Enigma Records-style metal wankage. BLACK EYES AND NECKTIES represent a vague art-garage presence, the rest have set the blender to "churn." To be eighteen or nineteen and in a scene full of homegrown bands… it's the best. Careful with those tats kids, some of these bands might be good enough to sell out. (RW)
(New Regard Media, PO Box 5706, Bellingham, WA 98227)

V/A – "Dirty Half Dozen" CD

Area specific comp from the south of England featuring six bands. PILGER and INTENT come out on top with the former's SEVEN SECONDS-esque ragging and the latter's blazing anthemic punk. CIRCUS ACT, HUMANS THE SIZE OF MICROPHONES and DISOMA playing varying degrees of emo rock, none of which moved me too much, then YOU'RE SMILING NOW BUT WE'LL ALL TURN INTO DEMONS finish things up with some FU MANCHU styled rockings. Worth it to check out the happenings on the south coast, and for the PILGER and INTENT tracks. (TB)
(www.milliepeedrecords.co.uk)

V/A – "Letters from the Landfill" LP

Okay first off the fucking THIS IS MY FIST tracks on here are quite possibly some of the most powerful punk songs I've heard in sometime—"Yank Fiction" alone just sends chills up and down my spine. I'm not even joking but they remain one of the best, most powerful, melodic punk-with-a-capital-P bands to come from the Bay Area in years. Annie's potent barbed vocal stylings and insightful lyrics are supported by the equally compelling, driving, melodic punk attack. SHOTWELL comes up next and they continue to crank out the totally raw, snotty, tuneful punk that they are known for—heartfelt with Jimmy's trademark snarl and well constructed lyrical imagery. ABANDON were a too short lived band that played complex, rythmatic and moody hardcore that always made me think RUDIMENTARY PENI in their lurching songs. Closing out the comp are the PEELS (who just changed their name recently to the TADPOLES) who play one super long song—very indie, very DINASOUR JR influenced, very layered and complex—about burning their hometown of Milbrae to the ground. All in all a totally great comp that provides a cool snapshot into a portion of the Bay Area scene. (MT)
(Left Off The Dial, PO Box 3941, Oakland, CA 9609, www.leftoffthedial.net)

V/A – "Organized Crime Records…" CD

Five shiny inches of CD, twelve sorta blah hardcore bands—A.18, MODERNLIFEISWAR, MY WAR, DEF CHOICE, NEVER ENOUGH, PLAN OF ATTACK amongst others. Moshy, metallic hardcore that looks to NYHC bands like SICK OF IT ALL, RAW DEAL and KILLING TIME for direction and inspiration. This stuff always works better live than on record, but those of you who'd rather mosh than thrash will certainly enjoy this compilation. (MT)
(Organized Crime, PO Box 213, Brookfield, IL 60513, www.organizedcrimerecords.com)

V/A – "Peepshow Three" DVD

A collection of low budget videos from the likes of ANTI-FLAG, AVAIL, NONE MORE BLACK, LAWRENCE ARMS, NOFX, and the other Fat bands with videos. Mixed in are interviews and goofy band stuff. This is a good time. If you are into punk videos you can do no wrong here. (RL)
(Fat)

V/A – "SoFla, So Good, So What" CD

This is a twenty-one band compilation from SoFla records (out of Southern Florida get it?). There's a lot of ska, pop-punk, and hardcore featuring big shots like: AGAINST ALL AUTHORITY, the CRUMBS, and RUNNAMUCKS. With solid songs by SPACE STATION 5, AC COBRA, the HANGOVERS, and HEATSEEKERS. Alright but nothing special. (HM)
(SoFla, www.soflarecords.com)

V/A – "Tutii Pazzi Vol. 7" LP

More in this series of rare and obscure punk from Yugoslavia—most of this stuff is of the primitive, totally raw and inept variety. Some of my personal picks are GENERALI, REFREND, GRADSKI MACORI, KAOS and PROCES. Sadly these contains no information about the bands—no history, no liner notes, no nothing—which is annoying as fuck cause I want to know!! You hear me Booty the Bootlegger?! (MT)
(no address)

V/A – "Tutti Pazzi Vol. 11" LP

Volume 11 of this endless compilation series covers a lot of vintage territory from Yugoslavian bands of various styles. Recording quality is not unlike a Bullshit Detector LP, and the song quality is equally variable. STRELNIKOFF delivers a thickly produced version of the DK's "Too Drunk to Fuck" that qualifies as the best track here, while PRO FUCKTORY takes on GG ALLIN's "No Rules" with as much energy but less success. KAIN sounds like a buzzier KAAOS, which shouldn't be confused with the post-punk synth/guitar throwaway from KAOS that appears here. Aggressive efforts by the more familiar two KATEGORIA and PROCES, but otherwise, this is probably for completists. (SS)
(Pimpek Eliminator, GERMANY)

V/A – "Two Legs Bad—Thirty Eight Legs Good" EP

Magic Bullet brings together CORN ON MACABRE, TEXTBOOK TRAITORS, CRIMSON SPECTRE, and WITCHCRAFT BY A PICTURE for this spastic four-way split 7 inch. I'm surprised and impressed with how solid of a comp this is. Each of the four bands play similar styles of chaotic emo-hardcore, while bringing something of their own to the table. Most importantly, none of them suck, which is hard enough to do on a two-way split. Fans of FRAIL and REVERSAL OF MAN should definitely check this out. (VH)
(Magic Bullet, PO Box 2370, Merrifield, VA 22116)

DEMOS

Send all demos to: Erin Yanke, PO Box 1113, Portland,OR 97207. Please provide a postage paid price and a mailing address with your demo! Reviews by Erin Yanke & Peter Avery.

ALTERCADO play mostly fast paced, thrashy, hardcore. On most songs, screaming vocals go over fast, heavy drumming and slightly sloppy, heavily distorted guitars. Some of the songs have bits of the early 90s emo hardcore sound while others have catchy, almost pop elements. Altogether, it's pretty good hardcore which mixes in just enough of other styles to make it interesting. (16 song CD, lyrics in Spanish and French, pje. 11 #415, Capricornio, Graneros, Chile, Reaccion56@latinmail.com) (Pete)

BIG SIN gave me two CDs of rock songs with punk energy. The first CD has 4 songs from over a year ago. On it they mix AC/DC style riffs and wanking lead parts with southern rock, throw in some more distortion and give it a punk feel. The distinctive nasal vocals give it even more of a rock feel. The second CD has only one, more recent song but shows much improvement. On this song they move away from the overly rock sound to create something more interesting. It still has a rock sound but there is more of a INTERNATIONAL NOISE CONSPIRACY feel to it. (5 song (total) CD, no lyrics, mars@truckermail.com) (Pete)

BLACKWALL HITCH recorded this demo live on WMSE (a radio station in Milwaukee), which is cool! The levels are equal, but quiet, and I had to crank it up. They sound like basic hardcore, with some fancy guitar work buried in there. The vocals are shouted and steady in their pace and inflection. (7 song Cassette, lyrics included. 3222 S. 23rd St., Milwaukee, WI 53215.) (Erin)

BREAD AND ROSES has a second CDR out there now. This one includes one less member (the drummer) and is live. So they went from a folksy punk band to being a guitar player and banjo player who play folk songs with gruff, harsh vocals and a punk attitude. The songs don't sound great but have a ton of energy and good lyrics, something you can't always say about folk songs. If you like the acoustic punk scene you might want to check them out. There is also a good SOCIAL DISTORTION cover. (8 song CD, with lyrics, 22 Mansfield St., Allston, MA 02134, songs are free on the internet at www.breadandroses.iuma.com) (Pete)

CONSEQUENCE OF BEING HEARD is an eleven-band compilation featuring seven cover songs, along with originals by I LOVE WRESTLER (drum machine speed-joke band style), TAB (all songs about soda, like their demo), HUNNICUTS (total pop punk), and SHARP KNIFE (solid driving punk, East Bay Style). A historical reference for a group of friends. (10 song Cassette, lyrics included. 2415 N. Pierce St., Milwaukee WI 53212.) (Erin)

CRACKS plays slapdash, vocal-driven punk. The vocals set the pace, usually around mid-tempo, and they're kind of singsong spoken. When the songs are faster, the vocals sound more like Dave MDC ranting. The drums are mixed really high, which is distracting, and makes it hard to describe the music as a whole. ($2 ppd; 3 song CD, lyrics included.12780 E. 2200 St., Atkinson, IL 61235.) (Erin)

CRISIS WHAT CRISIS plays mid to up tempo punk with some pop influence on their *Christopher Street Day* CDR. There is melodic feel to the songs but it is done without fitting into the "melodic hardcore" sound that is associated with your Fat bands. They have some parts that remind me of early SNUFF and others that remind me of the PINK LINCOLNS with a English accent. The music seems a bit simplistic at times but it's not done badly. The title track is a slower one but the best on here. (5 song CD, no lyrics, Robo Emke Thumbstr, 72 D-51103, Cologne, Germany, www.CrisisWhatCrisis.de) (Pete)

DEFEND MEANS ATTACK plays lo-fi and fast, equally influenced by punk rock grindcore and metal. The vocals are yelled, and occasionally more sore throat oriented. Break it down parts are represented, there are (bass and guitar) solos, and the chugging parts are present but not in your face. They cover a MISFITS song and a DRI song. ($1 ppd; 20 song CD, no lyrics included. 5350 Grouse Ct., Dayton, OH 45425.) (Erin)

DIVE BAR JUNKIES play fast hardcore songs. Sometimes they sound like the are trying to push the songs to fast and end up with a sloppy sound. The guitars play heavily distorted, basic bar chords that go into some kind of cheesy leads at times. The drummer goes as fast as he can but sounds a little off at times. The screaming vocalist pushes his voice all the way but the somewhat poor recording puts him too high in the mix and sometimes he fades in and out. Altogether, the music wouldn't be bad if they calmed themselves down a bit and get a decent recording. (5 song CD, no lyrics, the poor punks have no place to live, www.divebarjunkies.com) (Pete)

FACE PARADE plays clean, lo-fi, dissonant pop songs at a mid-tempo, and occasionally break into parts that are like reliving a bad mood. They seemed like they want to be darker and more depressed than they come off. (7 song CD, no lyrics included. 3300 Observatory, Cincinnati, OH 45208.) (Erin)

THE HELL is dark and fun. Lots of basic rock stylings pumped up to a punk rock level of energy and excitement. The vocals sound like a garage rock wild-man crooning. They plan school shootings and other troublesome activities, but a devil-may-care attitude is one of the punk rock fundamentals, right? ($1 ppd; 7 song CD, lyrics included. PO Box 861343, Tuscaloosa, AL 35486-0012.) (Erin)

THE JUMP BOYS play energetic, simply structured, and catchy punk rock. The vocals are raw-throat sung, and have an olden days punk rock sensibility to them. It's charming, and fun. (12 song CD, no lyrics included. 925 Gaye Lane, Arlington, TX 76012.) (Erin)

KUNG FLUDE play high energy punk rock'n roll. The songs are straight forward punk tunes but the simplicity works well due to the solid playing and the full sound of the guitars. The vocals mix screaming and singing in a 80s rock sort of way and make the whole thing work. There is also a pretty good cover of the GREG KIHN BAND. (6 song CD, no lyrics, www.kungflude.com) (Pete)

KYKLOOPPIEN SUKUPUUTTO is awesome! They've got a strong mix of hardcore drive and straightforward anger, mixed with catchy moments that take me by surprise, after I was totally engrossed in the rocking out. The tempo changes only slightly through out the demo, but stays comfortably in the fast lane. The vocals are a combination of the speak-real-fast style, and roaring. Totally recommended. (9 song CD, lyrics included. Pyynikintie 15 B 23, 33230 Tampere, Finland.) (Erin)

MERCURY LEGION plays a large mix of punk styles. The first song mixes metal riffs and guitar wanking with mid 80s BAD RELIGION style punk. The second is a pop punk song, the third is a mid tempo chugging song about hippies, the fourth fits into "melodic punk" and so on. When they are at their best they play simple pop punk songs that are catchy but not too sweet. The mixing of styles may work well live but on a recording it gets confusing. (13 song CD, no lyrics, no contact) (Pete)

NO DICE play straight edge hardcore. It's mostly fast and thrashy, with slower parts mixed in, as well as having stops and starts to mix it up. The yelling, in-your-face singer per-

forms the vocals, and the requisite aggro dudes do the back up vocals. ($2 ppd; 5 song CD, lyrics included. 3044 Pleasant Ave. S #4, Minneapolis, MN 55408) (Erin)

OTAN totally rule. They play like when hardcore and punk were first mixing, way back when. They're simple without sounding generic, and with good melodies! Catchy and invigorating. The vocals are spoken more than sung, with a bit of good ol' punk rock snottiness mixed in for good measure. They say it took over a year to get released, but I think it was well worth the wait. Get this. (3.5 Euros in Europe, 4.5 Euros for the rest of the world. 11 song cassette, lyrics included. Apdo: 224042, 08080, Barcelona, Spain.) (Erin)

THE PEDESTRIANS play low-key old style hardcore, no metal licks or speeding here. Yes, folks, actual melodies in the midst of deep-rooted sharp songs. The vocals are sung clearly, and mixed well without being buried. Quality. ($2 ppd; 6 song Cassette but they have CDs too, lyrics included. 5815 N. Sheridan #603, Chicago, IL 60660) (Erin)

PISS CHRIST is noisy with a strong foundation of rhythm. The guitar, and its distortion fit it together, giving you a hook if you need it, and more texture if you want it. They sing in Malaysian and English, although I should say they shout loud and long in those languages. It's a good, straightforward hardcore demo. (9 song Cassette, lyrics included. PO Box 242, 3070 Northcote, Victoria, Australia) (Erin)

POOL PARTY was a summer band that was slightly faster than mid-tempo, raw, and straight forward, and managed to capture a sense of fun onto the demo tape. Hints of PANTY RAID sneak out of the cabana, and they do that talking break it down back and forth thing that is always funny. (3 stamps. 4 song Cassette, no lyrics included. 1000 Starview Dr., Danville, CA 94526) (Erin)

SCATTERBOX INFECTION play mostly high speed, old style punk. The partly sung, partly screamed, gruff vocals work well over straight forward, no frills hardcore songs that have just a touch of pop. That is not to say that there aren't enough hooks to keep you interested throughout the whole thing. The songs are well played and the sound is good. (11 song CD, no lyrics, stressfactor@hotmail.com) (Pete)

TAB is based on the old diet soda of the same name. All their songs are taking a pro-TAB stance, except "I Hate Sports" by 7 SECONDS. But their sound? They sound like a sloppy fast hardcore band with garage-y sensibilities and a sense of humor. Excellent samples. (10 song Cassette, lyrics included. 2415 N. Pierce St., Milwaukee WI 53212.) (Erin)

THE UNWANTED have a CDR that it is a bit difficult to listen to. It begins with the poor recording. The off key vocals are very high in the mix. The guitar is over distorted, making it hard to make out what it is being played. The drums are hard to hear except for the snare and bass. The songs themselves are mid tempo, sloppy, punk numbers that might be done more justice if you could hear what is going on. (6 song CD, no lyrics, http://wtlord.servepics.com/anubis) (Pete)

URETTERS play minimalist late 60s style rock'n roll with a punk feel. Their sound is a mix between early STONES (they do a cover of "Get Off of My Cloud") and the CLASH. The songs are mid tempo, the guitars are clean, the vocals are sung a bit flat and the playing is a little sloppy but it all seems to work pretty well. Not great but it's fun to listen to. (3 song CD, some lyrics, lily_olily@msn.com) (Pete)

US AGAINST THEM is a four-track project, but doesn't sound like it. He plays a pretty raw, mostly fast, no-frills combination of the simplicity of 3-chord punk rock and the tough, slightly metal sub-genre of modern hardcore. The vocals are shouted, but enunciated clearly. ($3 ppd; 8 song Cassette, lyric booklet included. PMB 60, 595 W. Main ST., Norwich, CT 06360) (Erin)

VENICE is of the newest generation to feed off of old skate punk and turn around and make it their own. They are coming from many different directions. Simple blazing hardcore, JFA-inspired surf instrumentals, and posi-core moments all mixed together. They do a BIG BOYS cover, too! (13 song Cassette, lyrics included. Av, Corrientes 5080. dto G. C1414AJQ, Capital Federal, Buenos Aires, Argentina.) (Erin)

WOLFGANG BANG have sort CD the sounds much like the slower songs of the early QUEERS. Nasal singing over mid tempo to slow songs. The guitars play three chord riffs that are often muted. It's not bad but the songs lack the catchy element that the QUEERS had and they tend to drag after a while. (3 song CD, no lyrics, www.wolfgangbang.com) (Pete)

THE YEQUALS manage to mix some of the worst elements of some of my least favorite genres—emo and metal—and come up with something worse. (10 song CD, lyrics included. 6 West Elm Garden, San Antonio, TX 78230) (Erin)

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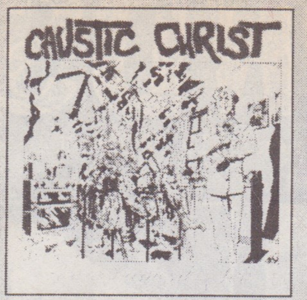

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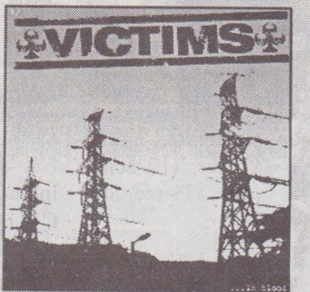

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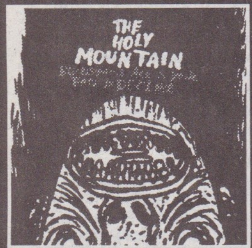

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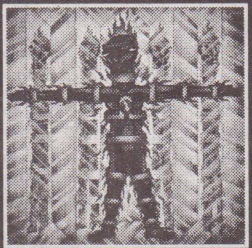

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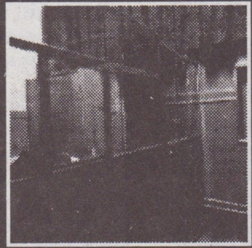

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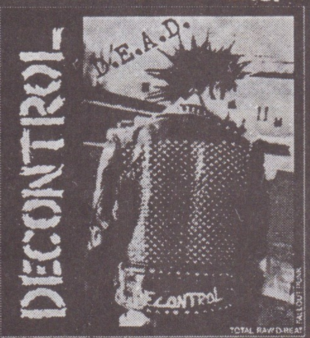

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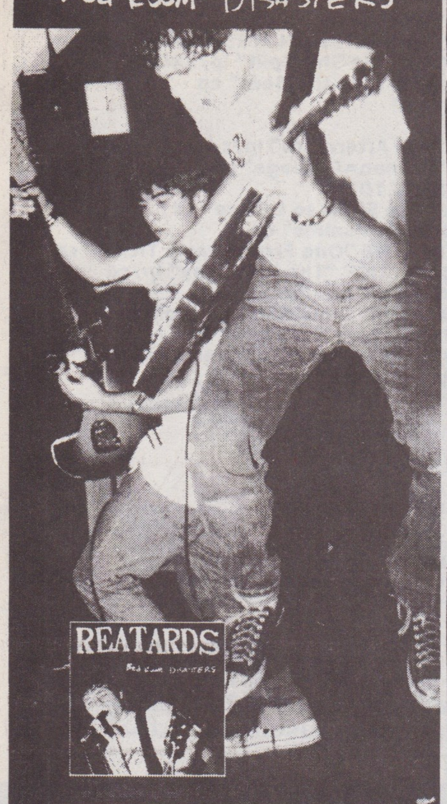

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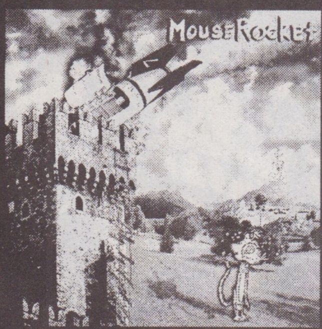

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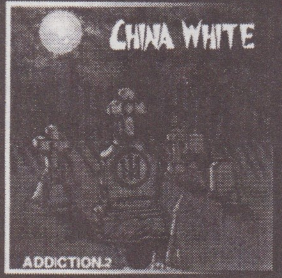

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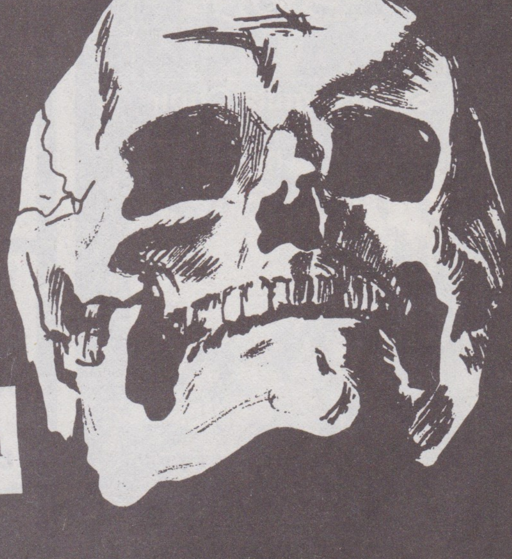

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Please send your zine in for review. Write down any information you want included in the review; method of printing, number of pages, issue number and post paid price. If you want us to include a foreign post paid price, tell us. If you accept trades, tell us. The only information we will include is what you provide us.

AGITATE #4 / $1
7.75 x 10.75 - copied - 4 pgs
This short anarcho-punk newsletter, free in person, is pretty rad for what it is. A page of European zine reviews, a page of crusty music reviews, a few photos (well reproduced) and some notes on local projects fill it up. I'm always glad to see it. (JM)
PO Box 202 / Shipley / BD18 3WB / United Kingdom

ALL SKEWED UP #1 - 14 / $4
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 82 pgs.
All Skewed Up is a compilation of editor Mike Twohig's other work – complete with musings on *Coldhandsdeadheart* and some good old ramblings. There is a series of drawings based off of Polaroid's in issue 6 that really caught my eye. Oh, and the zine is basically an art zine. There are also some really awesome hybrids of contemporary art meets art noveau. This zine is *da bomb.* (MF)
m-twohig@hotmail.com

THE BLASPHUNNY PAGES #1 / $?
8.5 x 11 - copied - 44 pgs
There are quite a few zines that try to combine personal stories with drawings vaguely relating to those stories — most of them suck. This one is actually pretty good, the stories about coming out to catholic parents, and being part of the road crew for a METALLICA tour are great, and the drawings definitely add to the stories. I would say there is nothing wrong with this zine if it weren't for the damn poetry. Everyone thinks they are Edgar Allen-fucking-Poe lately. Fuck I hate poetry! But other than that this zine is great and I look forward to future efforts, as long as they promise to get rid of the poetry. (CQ)
846 NE Liberty St / Portland, OR 97211
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BRISK WALK #2 / free or trade
8.5 x 5.5 - copied - 36 pgs
Sort of like when one writes the year 2003 on a letter even though it is October 2004, I felt reading this zine was like a jolt or an awakening, in that yes of course we are supposed to talk about the politics of race/class/gender and be goofy at the same time, honesty and personal divulgence alongside pointing out how fucking stupid live journals are, all while questioning and reaffirming the point of writing in the first place. Yes, I can float between the relevance and irrelevance of years passing, and I can be reenergized by finding out that, over in Miami, there's this kid who has a lot of shit to talk and a lot of hope as well. (JB)
Matt Uglyfoot / 5700 N Tamiami Trail / Box 402 / Sarasota, FL 34243-2197
AsherIV@bellsouth.net

BURNOUT #1 / "a few bucks" or trade
8.5 x 11 - copied - 32 pgs
Reprints and shit from the internet heralding our doom make up most of this. Mass extinctions, no more oil, industrialism, GM foods, Bush & Kerry suck… My favorite part was the modest proposal to revitalize downtown Rockford with gladiator battles between child-molesting priests and Taliban soldiers. At least the piece about the end of oil is well-documented. I wouldn't pay the asking price, although this copy did come with a lot of supplemental literature of the Crimethinc./Green Anarchist variety. (JM)
R. A. Lewis / PO Box 1683 / Rockford, IL 61110-0183

CHAOS AND FRUIT PUNCH #2 / $2
8 x 11 - printed - 18 pgs
This zine is part music zine, part journal, part political, with a few ramblings thrown into the mix. I dislike the computer-generated, pixilated fonts, and wasn't too impressed with the layout. I did like the random Vincent van Gogh paintings thrown in. Content was decent, too. Worth checking out. (MF)
PO Box 13380 / Mill Creek, WA / 98082
http://www.operationphoenixrecords.com

CULTOR-SORE #16 / $3
4.25 x 7 - copied - 50 pgs.
This is real. Three reasons why this one was rad to read: 1) So much emphasis on seasons (I forgot about them because I live in California). 2) The chapter on neighbors… especially Captain Crazy, who's a retired police officer, obsessed with yelling at his dog. 3) The dream chapter (because I rarely remember mine). Oh, and this kid is an awesome writer and the layout is killer, too. Buy it. (MF)
PO Box 68719 / Virginia Beach, VA / 23471
sorezine@aol.com

CUT SICK #1 / $3 or trade
8.5x 11 - copied - 28 pgs
Nice debut issue of this Aussie zine—it has a nice "old school" zine feel (remember our

friends cut & paste?) with lots of cheesy graphics and hardcore within. There are lots of zine and record reviews (of course), interviews with Parts Unknown Records, The Collapse, and Missing Teeth. There's also a great listing of early 80s Boston hXc bands and some personal bits here and there. (MD)
PO Box 891 / Tweedheads / NSW 2485 / Australia

HEY WHAT'S UP? #4 / ?
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 16 pgs
Hey What's Up is the product of Troy Gallagher, of Cincinnati, Ohio. There is an interview with Glenn Danzig, a couple of iffy stories, a collage or two, a crappy drawing, and a crossword puzzle that appears to be purloined from the pages of *TV Guide*. The title of the zine poses a question, which, unfortunately, the contents answer resoundingly. Not much is up. (AV)
1047 Lanette Dr / Cincinnati, OH 45230

IF WRITING WAS OUTLAWED ONLY OUTLAWS WOULD WRITE #1 / $1 or trade
8.5 x 11 - copied - 16 pages
I would like to start by saying that this fanzine appears to have been made with the best of intentions. Inside, are lots and lots and lots of tidbits about pro-wrestling. The wife of the wrestling fan is a fan of breastfeeding, though her entries could have benefited from the use of some facts to support her fervent opinion. She favors the breast to the bottle and is, thereby, a fan, as is her nursing son. After the fan stuff, comes the part that I was hoping to be the saving grace, the "Legacy Legends, Top 80 Bands of All Time" section. I am usually a sucker for lists like these, as they make for great icebreakers in awkward social settings. I was beginning to feel awkward about my own personal feelings regarding this zine. After trudging through the first few sections, I was ready to be comforted by something I could relate to. Well, it went like this. First, the Misfits...hmmm, ok. Then some rapper was next in the line-up. Then the list composers came out with the Beatles... I guess Yoko's cool, but ouch. Then, in line directly behind the Beatles, all covered in poop was fuckin' GG Allin. GG immediately grabbed John Lennon from his respective grave and together they rolled over, not once but three times! Ok, it is not my list to criticize. These people are "entitled" to their opinions, as they say. The list was to be continued in issue #2, and so I said "psheww!" The authors, Rosy and Robert, are also fans of cannabis, as am I. The cluster of cannabis facts would be better received had they listed their sources. You quote facts, you cite the author of the quote/s. Citing your sources gives the information integrity, thus enhancing its believability. I'd also like to re-state that I'm into weed. Hippies chose weed and the Nazis, they preferred the speed. The disorganized, stream-of-consciousness style of this zine is more like something that would have been conceived on day three of a runner—to me it said speed, not weed. This, however, is only my humble opinion, and I am sure that there is an appreciative audience for this material, but it is not I. (DS)
Rosy and Robert Murillo / 723 Dayhill / Bayard NM 88023.

THE INNER SWINE vol. 10, #9 / $2
5.5 x 8 - copied - 62 pgs
Jeff writes about his life and his philosophies in this long-running zine. But he's an office worker who lives in New Jersey, so I can't get real excited about the material. Some of his ideas, like a love of beer and a disdain for electoral politics, do mirror my own, but I've never been an admirer of his writing. This issue tackles a messy office bathroom, fiction about a party, and his public readings, among other subjects. There is plenty to read here for those who are down with his style. (JM)
PO Box 3024 / Hoboken, NJ 07030

KING CAT #63 / $2.50
8.5 x 5.5 - copied - 36 pgs
Grr, I hate poetry (as previously stated)! Not even good drawings can save a zine from the wrath of poetry, especially if there's lots of it. On the other hand if you like poetry you should pick up this zine. There is some really good art, Good Stories, and poetry. Actually I probably would have really liked this zine if it weren't for the poetry. (CQ)
PO Box 170535 / San Francisco, CA 94117
www.king-cat.net

MEDIA WHORE #4 / $2
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 32 pgs
I've now been exposed to new forms of feminist art—synchronized swimming, harvesting your eggs, and ol' trusty—radical cheerleading. It's nice to see how artists are placing a new spin on traditionally stale or oppressive ideas, even though it's not my cup of tea. The most interesting article in here was about Chrissy Caviar®, a display of one woman's eggs that is both art and a commodity. There are also zine and art show reviews. (MD)
20 Ricky Drive / Framingham, MA 01702
www.mediawhorezine.com

MODERN ARIZONA #6 / $1 or trade
8.5 x 5.5 - copied - 28 pgs
Absurdity, I salute thee. My favorite part is the photo essay in which the boom box attacks the CD player, but the hammer wins. Zines like this one are a happy break from linear thought. And it comes with a free CD! Marvelous. (JB)
Joe Unseen / PO Box 494 / Brewster, NY 10509
unseen@bestweb.net

MOVE YOUR ASS #7 / postage
11 x 8 - printed - 36 pgs - Czech
This fanzine covers punk, hardcore, crust, ska, and Oi. There are plenty of short interviews including From Ashes Rise, Los Fastidios, Discipline, Friendship Forever, Firestars, Vertigo, Propagandhi, and Five Knuckle. There are also plenty of ads, but not necessarily a lot of record reviews. This fanzine proves there is a lot happening in the Czech Republic. Oh yeah! This fanzine also comes with its customary free CD sampler, this one featuring stuff on Household Name Records. (HH)
Jan Kovar / PO Box 18 46331 Chrastava / Czech Republic
moveyourass@sesnam.cz

ORIENTAL BEAT #7 / $2
8 x 6 - copied - 32 pgs - Italian
This small fanzine consists of several short interviews including Jeff Dahl, Nikki Sudden, The Lords Of Altamont, The Spades, and Mad Driver Records. There are a bunch of gig

reviews, and a few pages of record reviews. *Oriental Beat* looks like a good fanzine for checking the now Italian punk scene. (HH)
c/o Miguel Bisceglia / Piazza Cinque Giornate 2 / 20051 Limbiate-MI / Italy
xmiguelx@freemail.it

PEA #1/ 50¢
3.25 x 4.6 - copied - 23 pages
This little gem offers a *PEA*-sized glimpse into the lives of some young girls in a band called "The Leah Quinelle Allstars" out of Iowa, and some of their friends. OK, so not everyone is a fan of the same stuff, obviously; although we often share many of the same gripes. One common gripe is that journal-esque zines about persons unknown and their lives are often uninteresting. If the storyteller is a pal, or perhaps a friend of a pal, the tales will undoubtedly offer more in the way of intrigue, and quite often it's more than that even. The author in this case is not a pal, but I was charmed by her stories anyway. She and her band mates, etc., seemed to me like a fun bunch of kids. The author, Happy, has a sense of humor which she conveys comfortably onto the page. The ability to do so is one that I value, as a reader. Moving backwards, I'd like to note that on the first page there is a disclaimer. "This is not a tour-diary," and it is not, though some of the entries occurred while the girls were on tour. Touring and not, Happy and her friends came across as creative and loveable people. I felt a bit homesick for teen-agedness while reading the one about piling into a tiny car with 7 close friends, smoking cigarettes, and then drinking forties by a river beneath a bridge...getting scared, dropping acid, ah, innocence...Live it up! Another bonus is the size of this zine. *PEA* allows itself to be read through quickly. So, even if you were to disagree with me about the content, the pain you feel would not last. (DS)
Happy / 702 W Burlington Ave / Fairfield IA 52556

PFE #1 / $2
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 36 pgs
This is a zine from Canada. It has lots of stuff in it that I really enjoyed reading. There are some interviews inside; one with Johnny Crap, a guy who does show fliers some of which are total Pushead style, but mostly are not. There's an interview with Jolie Holland, a lady who plays traditional bluegrass and country stuff, and also an interview with Nancy Ross, who runs a concert promotions company in Canada called Greenland Productions. Oh yea, there's an advice column run by Atom Goren of Atom and His Package (RIP.) as well as some other articles. To give you a feel for one article in particular; you know when you see some lame looking guy riding a scooter w/ dreadlocks and he's got an ICP shirt on and you think to yourself "God, what a jerk" but then you go and do something stupid like falling off your bicycle and that jerk goes and ends up helping you out and you end up talking for a while and you find out he's rather worldly and kind and beyond that even pretty funny and awesome and man you feel pretty bad now for judging that guy. Well there's an article about something sort of like that in there. The cover of this zine got wet sitting on my bathroom sink and then it left a stain. That's what I get for reading in there. (CH)
78 Rachel E / Montreal, PQ / H2W 1C6 / Canada

PANACHE #21 / free
8.5 x 11 - printed - 48 pgs.
Panache is a free zine that primarily covers Bay Area bands. Issue #21 gives us columns, a short story, an article explaining simple repairs on musical equipment, and interviews with the Hospitals, 50 Million, the Sixteens, the Wives, Extreme Elvis, and most importantly, Japan's D.M.B.Q. which, plain and simple, is a can't-miss. A sample Q&A: "Q: *Any personal hygiene secrets while on the road?* A: I have dream in my sleeping that my penis became rose flower." *Panache* is definitely worth a look. (AV)
PO Box 410622 / San Francisco, CA 94141

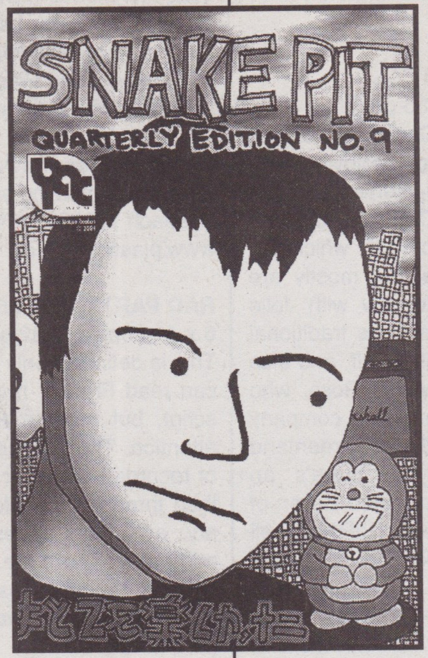
PLASTIC BOMB #41 / $6
11 x 8 printed - 124 pgs - German
Yep, this fanzine is loaded with new cool punk rock stuff, including interviews with Billy Bragg, Turbostaat, Bonehouse, Avail, and Ein Leben. There is an article on the 80s punk band SS Ultrabrutal, There are also articles on the political situation in Afghanistan, and on the punk scene in Venezuela. There are absolutely loads of new record reviews, and plenty of cool ads. I should mention there are many new re-releases of great European 80s punk bands, and *Plastic Bomb* is great placed to stay informed about such events, plus see the ads for where this stuff is available. Finally, the fanzine—as always—comes with a twenty something song CD sampler. (HH)
Postfach 100205 / 47002 Duisburg / Germany
www.plasticbomb.de

RAD PARTY #35 / $5
6 x 4 - copied - 132 pgs - French
This is definitely only a fanzine for those who can read French. It is typed in an attractive script, but totally demands one's complete attention. The fanzine starts off with reviews of records from older punk bands. There are then three long articles that are almost literary, and then an excellent list of contact addresses. There are no new record reviews, or ads. Nevertheless if one were fluent in French this fanzine would be an exciting read. (HH)
B.P. No 7 / 78110 Le Vesinet, Cedex / France
smallbudgetproductions@minitel.net

RAD QUIBBS! #1 / 50¢ / 2 stamps / trade
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 8 pgs
Rad Quibbs! Mad libs! I love Mad Libs! Golnar and I spent a pleasant afternoon filling these out and laughing at the outcomes of our chosen verbs and nouns. These are punk Mad Libs and they're an easy way to make yourself believe that you are actually funny even

though you probably are not. Some adjectives that never fail in the game of mad libs: gnarly, dude brains and chymo. (CH)
chartrusemag@yahoo.com

RAZORCAKE #22 / $4
8 x 10.5 - printed - 118 pgs
This was the first issue of *Razorcake* I ever read but I guess it's been around for a while now. *Razorcake* is set up a lot like *MRR* beginning with columns (I liked Maddy *Tight Pants*), some articles (this issue focuses on voting issues), and then going into a bunch of band interviews. In this issue there are interviews with The Marked Men, Geisha Girls, Mea Culpa, The Midnight Evils, and The Bad Vibes. The zine ends with record and zine reviews. So if you're looking for a zine about music that doesn't completely ignore politics and is sorda like *MRR* then there ya go. (CH)
PO Box 42129 / Los Angeles, CA 90042
www.razorcake.com



ROUND THINGS ROLL #4 / $3
7 x 8.5 - copied - 24 pgs
Round Things Roll is a self-proclaimed travel zine, of which I found to be completely delicious. The stories are just lovely. *RTR's* author, Allison also does a smashing layout. Very clean. In this issue, there is a poetic contribution by Aaron Cometbus, a lesson taught by Greg Harvester, and a moving piece by one Grabass Dave providing even greater chewing pleasure. He gets blindsided by some prick in the desert-somewhere in Texas, and winds up in jail—really fuckin' funny. The stories told by Allison are strewn with colorful and descriptive language, and not one ounce of it comes off as pretentious. This author does not abuse the mighty adjective, as my comment may suggest. Throughout, there is a combination of line drawings, pertaining to each entry, and of course some cut-and-paste for flavor. I always liked the taste of paste. Perhaps I am too inexperienced as a writer myself to provide you with more compelling reasons to pick up this issue, other than the fact that it looks and smells terrific. The writing is top-notch, and I like mine well done. In my opinion, this is written very well, and I recommend it highly. MMmmmm. (DS)
Allison Williams / 204 Miller St / Fayetteville AR 72703

SCREW JEFF OWENS # ? / $?
8.5 x 5.5 - copied - 12 pgs
The author has taken what would appear to be his everyday journal entries, shrunk them down to a quarter of a page and filled a zine with them. It's not too bad, and I actually found it interesting, but I don't know if I would have paid money for it. But maybe you voyeuristic types will enjoy it, although it is a pretty quick read. Actually, this reminds me a lot of my journal, if I had one. (CQ)
8055 E Thomas Road Apt A-202 / Scottsdale, AZ 85251
sparticushughs@hotmail.com

SNAKE PIT #9 / $2
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 32 pgs
I've enjoyed *Snake Pit* in the past—I really like the idea of taking your day and encapsulating it into three panels. This issue features a Japanese tour, many parties, shows, drunken nights, hungover mornings and the dreariness of work. It was kind of sad to me, the more I read, the more chump-ish Ben became to me, I don't know if it is his weird behavior toward his girlfriend(s), the undying support of Rich Mackin or what. So in that sense, it was a little disappointing. (MD)
412 1/2 University Ave Suite #3 / San Diego, CA 92103
www.youngamericancomics.com

TRUST #107 / $4
11 x 8 - printed - 68 pgs - German
As usual, *Trust* is an excellent read, covering the underground music scene worldwide. This issue includes interviews with the bands Le Scrawl, The Locust, A Case Of Grenada, C.Aarme, and the tour book of The Lonely Kings. There is an in depth review of the new film about Hanau A Go-Go, a German city with a long rock and roll history that includes the legendary Monks from 1965. The fanzine also has lots of cool photos, new record reviews, ads, columns and gig listing that includes the new German Totenhosen tour. (HH)
Dolf Hermannstaedter / Postfach 110762 / 28087 Bremen / Germany
www.trust-zine.de

UNDER THE VOLCANO #81 / $3.95
8.5 x 11 - printed - 52 pgs
I don't get it. There's an interview with the Briefs in this here mag in which the interviewer specifically asks about their album title *Sex Objects*, "so as not to upset the feminist readership". It sounds like they are on my side, right? Later in that same interview, he asks them "'Shoplifting at Macy's'...a tribute to Wynona Ryder, if you were the security guard who caught her stealing, "...is there anything she could've done to perhaps...I don't know...persuade you to let her go?" It seems innocent you may say, and as a strident supporter of free speech, boy am I tired of endlessly griping about zines that offend me because of trivial sexist content. I say trivial and I mean, in the most "tolerating" and hopeful sense, what others may overlook as "just a joke" or perhaps that which goes in the category of personal views, which may not reflect the views of the magazine. Well. I could move on if I didn't find stupid shit like that everywhere in it. For example, a columnist talks about coaxing a fellow teen under the bleachers presumably to get ass but ends up choking her. It's just not funny. I feel that the male readership is really to whom the magazine is marketed, and a bunch of shit-sucking male readers besides. Do these editors not realize that there are real live breathing and thinking punks who are women that they, as fellow punks, are required to acknowledge and interact with? Remove the ad for some record that uses a huge set of tits on the cover of their album, thanks. (JB)
PO Box 236 / Nesconset NY 11767

USUAL SUSPECT #8 / $1 / free to prisoners
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 24 pgs.
When first perusing the pages of *Usual Suspect*, it appeared, as with so many zines I see, to be written by someone who really needs to get out more, someone who could really benefit from a good, long trip. Then, I realized that the zine is written by a person in prison. Oops. Obviously, prison is a raw deal. I give a shitload of respect to people who make zines in prison despite all of the obstacles: limited resources, difficulties in distribution, and most importantly, the boredom and monotony of prison life, which have gotta make it next to impossible to feel inspired enough to do anything creative. *Usual Suspect* is a solid effort, but will probably appeal most to those behind bars. If you have a prison pen pal, send them a copy. (AV)
Mishap Publishing / PO Box 5841 / Eugene, OR 97405

YOU ARE HERE #1 & 2 / $2
7 x 6.5 - copied - 24 pgs
Two short and simple little comics from Davis, that cover the usual comic / zine fare of work, road trips, and cadavers. It's pretty hard to hate on a zine that takes ten minutes to read and still gets a little chortle out of you. No harm in checking these out. (CR)
525 Alvarado / Davis, CA 95616
jenm@fastmail.fm

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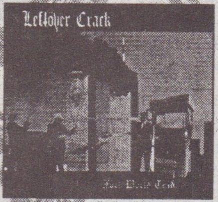

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BM-001:
The Scarlet Letter: *How is Your Heart?* CD

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Karst: *Vision of Insane Hope* ... $10/$11
Karst: *Receive the Void* EP ... $6/$7
At War With Shadows: *Healing is not An Option* Ep ... $6/$7
Seized: *Discography* ... $10/$11
.357 Justice: *Alone, Cold, and Blue* ... $10/$11
The Scarlet Letter: *The Collected Letters* ... $10/$11

Vinyl:

v/a: Deadly Sins 7" Boxset: w/ *Damad, Unruh, +5* ... $15/$16
Gomorrha: *Discography* 12" ... $9/$10
Macabre: *Drill Bit Lobotomy* 7" ... $6/$7
Skinless: *Miscreant* 7" ... $6/$7
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Hellchild/Word Salad Split 10" ... $8/$9
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v/a: Mein Comp 7": w/ *Knife Fight, JBA, Das Oath* ... $5/$6
Disrespect: *Justice in a Bag* 7" ... $4/$5
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Witch Hunt: *EPs & Chaos Radio Session* Cd ... $8/$9
State of Fear: *Discography* 12"/Cd ... $8/$9
Axon: *Leper Viper* Cd ... $8/$9
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SBV: *S/T* 7" ... $5/$6
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The County Medical Examiners: *Reeking Rhapsodies* 7" ... $6/$7
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Totalitär: *Wallbreaker '86-'89* Cd ... $9/$10
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Carcass: *Demo Collection* Cd ... $11/$12
Dark Funeral: *In The Sign* Cd ... $12/$13
Destroy: *Discography 90-94* Cd ... $8/$9
Fear of God: *First* Mcd ... $8/$9
Morbosidad *S/T* Cd ... $10/$11
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Impaled: *Mondo Medicale* 12" ... $14/$15
Tuomiopaivan Lapset: *Discography* 2x12" ... $12/$13
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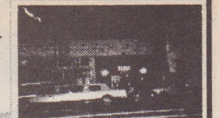

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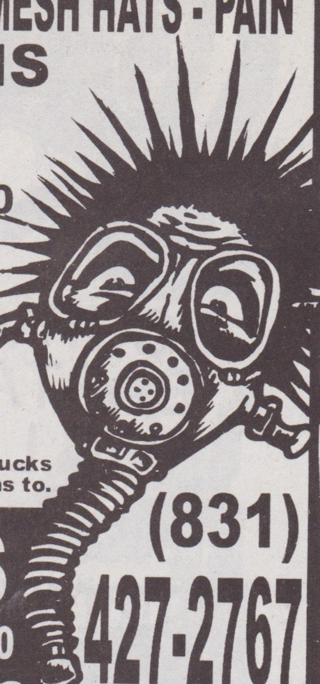

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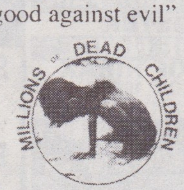

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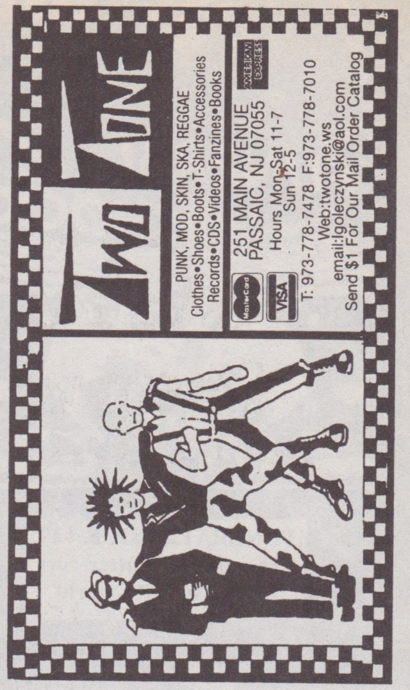
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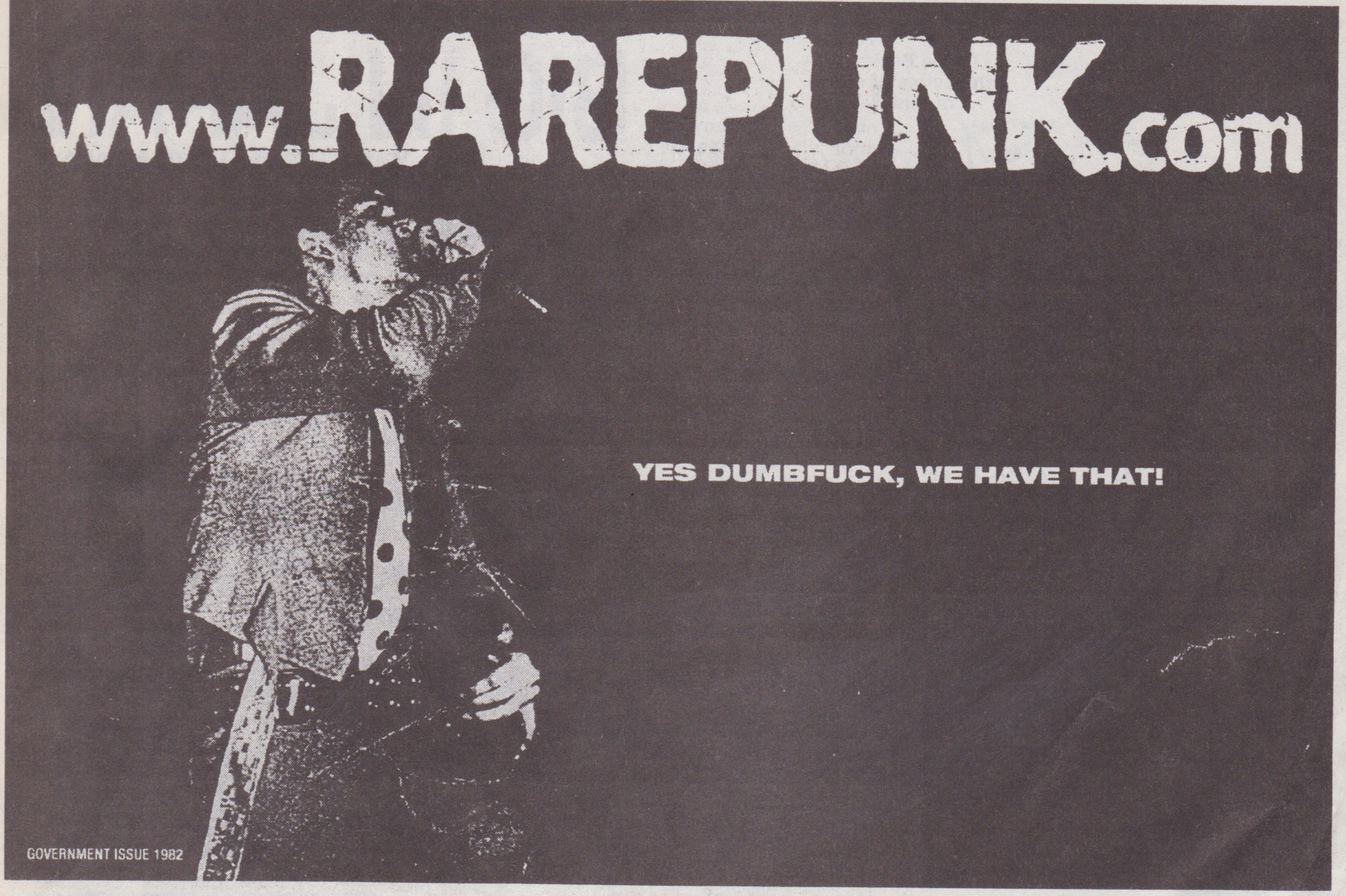
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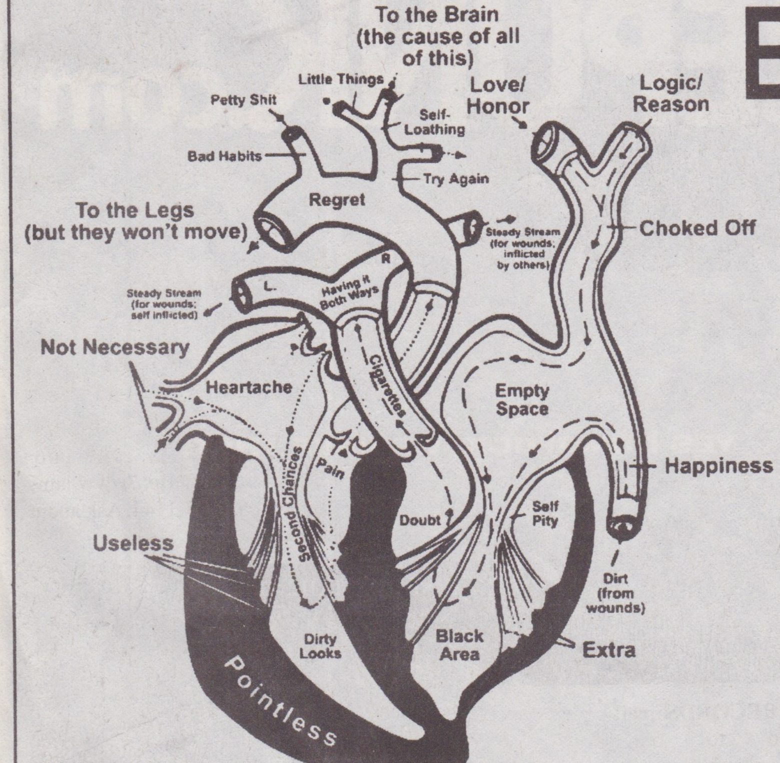

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